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THE NOVELS
AND MISCELLANEOUS WORKS
OF DANIEL DE FOE.

VOLUME THE FOURTEENTH.

RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP.

THE NOVELS

AND

MISCELLANEOUS WORKS

OF

DANIEL DE FOE.

WITH A BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR OF THE AUTHOR, LITERARY PREFACES TO THE VARIOUS PIECES, ILLUSTRATIVE NOTES, ETC. INCLUDING ALL CONTAINED IN THE EDITION ATTRIBUTED TO

THE LATE SIR WALTER SCOTT,

WITH CONSIDERABLE ADDITIONS.

VOL. XIV.

RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP.

OXFORD:

PRINTED BY D. A. TALBOYS,

FOR THOMAS TEGG, 73, CHEAPSIDE, LONDON.

1840.

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RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP.

WITH AN APPENDIX.

IN ONE VOLUME.

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1840.

RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP:

BEING

HISTORICAL DISCOURSES

ON THE

Necessity of Marrying RELIGIOUS HUSBANDS and WIVES only.

AS ALSO

Of Husbands and Wives being of the same Opinions in religion with one another.

WITH AN

APPENDIX

OF THE NECESSITY

Of taking none but RELIGIOUS SERVANTS, and a Proposal for the better managing of Servants.

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PREFACE.

As this way of writing in cases not much unlike this, has been approved of, and has met with great success in other hands, it has been an encouragement to this undertaking.

Historical dialogues, it must be confessed, have a very taking elegancy in them, and the story being handed forward in short periods, and quick returns, makes the retaining it in the mind the easier, and the impression the more lasting, as well as delightful.

The story represented here is capable of such and so many applications to the cases of young people, whose settlement is always in view, that there will never be a time when the instruction will be useless.

If anybody should object, that too much is put here upon the woman's part, and that a lady cannot be supposed, in the midst of her lover's addresses, to take upon her to demand such an account of himself as is here suggested; that few men will stoop to such an examination; and few women

venture the loss of their lovers upon such a subject; let such consider how small the satisfaction here proposed on the lady's part is, and that no gentleman can think hard a woman should be satisfied whether he is a Christian or a heathen; a man of religion or an atheist; and indeed no man of any tolerable share of sense, will address himself to a lady for marriage, but he will take care to anticipate her inquiries of that kind, by showing some concern, for knowing what she is herself.

The universal neglect of this trifle, both in men and women, is what this book is designed to correct, and there needs no greater satire upon that part, than the success of the several cases here related: (viz.) the happy life of the youngest sister, who came into the measures proposed; and the miserable condition of the second sister, who rashly threw herself into the arms of a man of differing principles from her own, though blessed with all the good-humour in the world.

In these accounts, the very great consequence of being equally yoked, is illustrated; and it appears here how essential a share of religion, and a harmony of principles in religion, are to the felicity of a conjugal life.

To those who do not cast off all concern for themselves; who do not make marrying a mere leap in the dark, and as the first lady expresses it, rushing like a horse into the battle, these things will be of some moment. As to those that are void of care of those matters, they must go on, and

pay for their experience; let them take heed, and buy it as cheap as they can.

If the women seem to be favoured in this story, and have the better part of the staff put into their hands, it is because really the hazard is chiefly on their side, and they are generally the greatest sufferers in the success: but if it were otherwise, yet, if they are treated with more than ordinary regard, the author hopes they will not lay that sin to his charge.

The Appendix to this work speaks for itself: irreligious servants, in some respects, are the plague of families, and keep our houses always in disorder. 'Tis a wonderful thing to reflect on, that so scandalous an evil, so easy to be rectified, should have gone to such a degree as it has in the world; and that masters and mistresses of families, have not long ago for their own ease, and for the satisfaction of one another, come to a general law, for the managing, the punishing, and, above all, for the recommending of servants; which, if they would do, they would easily, I say, bring them to know themselves, and do their duty; neither of which is the case among servants at this time.

But 'tis all our own faults; we recommend sluts and thieves, drones, and saucy, insolent fellows and wenches: I say, we recommend them to one another, without any concern for our neighbour's safety and peace; in a word, to pay the debt of charity for those creatures, which have abused us, we forget the debt of justice to one another, and

betray the confidence which one housekeeper and neighbour owes to another, in one of the most essential articles of their families' quiet.

This is all exposed here; and though this part is very short, being but an accident to the other discourses; yet, I presume to say, it will be as acceptable, and, in its kind, as useful as any of the rest.

This edition of this work recommends itself upon this express condition, viz., That the author has not found occasion to alter anything from the former (errors of the press excepted), nor have I found room for any additions, that usual pretence to set off new impressions, and impose upon those who have bought the first; being still fully satisfied, that the goodness of the design, and the usefulness of the subject, will make this work acceptable wherever it comes.

RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP.

PART I.

There lived in a village near London, an ancient grave gentleman of a good estate, which he had gained by trade, having been bred a merchant, though of a very good family too; he had been a man in great business, but his circumstances being easy, and his love of a retired life increasing with his years, he had left off his business, and taken a house a mile or two out of town; he was a widower at the time of this affair, his wife having been dead some years before.

He had five or six children, and all grown up, but none settled in the world, though he had an estate sufficient to give them very plentiful fortunes. His three daughters were very agreeable women, and, which was still better, were very sober, modest, sensible, and religious young ladies, two of them especially; and as the character of their father, and the fortune he was able to give them, recommended them very well to the world, so they had several gentlemen that made honourable and handsome proposals to their father for their marriage.

I shall most carefully avoid giving any room here so much as to guess what opinion in religion they were bred up in, or whether the old gentleman was a churchman or a dissenter; and the same caution

I shall use with all the rest of the persons whom I shall bring upon the stage in the course of this story; my reason for which, everybody will understand by the nature of the relation, and of the times we live in.

The father of these ladies had been a man always, till now, hurried in the world, being crowded with a vast business, taken up with getting money, and with growing rich; so that he neither had much concern for, or indeed took any care of, the education or instruction of his children, but left them wholly to the conduct of their mother. Nor was it any great loss to the children, especially to the daughters, their mother being a most pious, religious, and virtuous lady, who was not only extraordinarily qualified to instruct her children, but gave up her whole time to it from their childhood.

One morning, a little before her death, calling her daughters to her, she told them, among other things, that as to marriage, she had but two injunctions to lay upon them, which, as she was not likely to live to see them settled, she would desire them to lay down as maxims in the choice of their husbands; and which she would, as upon her death-bed, if her words had any extraordinary influence upon them, oblige them to observe strictly, viz.,

1. Never to marry any man, whatever his person or fortune might be, that did not at least profess to be a religious man.

2. Never to marry any man, how religious soever he may seem to be, if he was not of the same principles and opinion in religion as themselves.

And as this was but a little before her death, so the daughters were more than ordinarily touched with the sense of it, and resolved to pursue it exactly. How they did pursue it, and the consequences of it, will be seen in the following dialogues.

It followed some time after, that a gentleman of a very good estate courted the youngest of these daughters; and making very handsome proposals to her father, (for he offered to settle 600*l.* per annum upon her,) the father was exceedingly pleased with the match, he being a gentleman, thoroughly well-bred, an agreeable person, and, in a word, nothing appearing to give the least reason why he should not be as acceptable to the lady as he was to the father.

As he came thus recommended to the father, there appeared nothing disagreeable in it to the young lady, nor had she at his first appearance the least exception to make against the gentleman as to his person. Indeed, as to his estate, though her fortune was very handsome, yet his was so far beyond it, that there was no comparison in the case; and besides all this, she had this engaging circumstance in the proposal, viz., that she being the youngest of the three daughters, the gentleman had passed over her two eldest sisters, and had singled her out by his more particular fancy, giving her that undeniable mark of his affection, viz., that she would be the wife of his choice, and consequently that she would have an uncommon security of the sincerity of his love to her.

The father opposed his proposal a little at first, as a slight offered to his eldest daughters; but the gentleman told him, that he hoped, if he accepted his design of coming into his family, he would give him leave to take the person his judgment had made choice of, and that he thought he might be happy with; that it would be a very hard circumstance to him, and what he could not think of with patience, to marry one of his daughters and be in love with another; that he was very far from offering any slight to the eldest, letting him

know, that happening to see the youngest first, he found such suitableness, and something so agreeable in her to him, that he resolved to look no further; that, perhaps, if he had seen the eldest or the second daughter first, it might have been the same thing; but that as he could not answer for the bias of his fancy, so neither could he answer it to his own conduct not to choose her, that was from the first moment he saw her, the only woman in the world that he ever thought could make him happy.

Her father could make no return to an answer that had so much weight in it, and which appeared to be so sincere; and, therefore, not acquainting his eldest daughter with the design he had to propose her to him, he took occasion to talk to them all together one morning as they were drinking chocolate; and begins merrily with them thus:—

DIALOGUE I.

Father. Well, girls, you little think now, which of you all is like to be first married. What say you, child, (turning to the youngest;) I hope you are content to let your eldest sisters go before you?

3rd Daughter. Yes, yes, sir; I desire both my sisters may go before me; for I see nothing in the world to make me in haste.

Fa. Why, what's the matter, that you are so out of love with the world all on a sudden? Is it that you think yourself too good for everybody, or everybody too good for you?

3rd Da. No, sir; I am neither so vain to think the first, or so humble to think the last; but I desire to think of myself as I ought to think.

Fa. How is that, pray?

3rd Da. Why, sir, I think I live too well to change for the worse; and this is not an age to change for the better, and therefore I desire to be as I am.

Fa. Why is this age so much worse than that which went before, pray?

3rd Da. Nay, sir, I don't know; but I am very well satisfied, sir, with your first proposal, that my sisters may try before me.

Fa. Well, well; and if you go before your sisters there will be no harm done, if it be to your liking, I hope; I dare say none of your sisters will be angry. At which the two eldest said, No, no; we shall be very glad to see it. And so they fell to jesting with their younger sister, till they almost angered her.

You are mighty difficult, says the eldest sister, that you fall upon the whole world, as if there was nothing good enough for you.

Says the second sister, She will be as easily pleased as another, I warrant her, if she was talked to in earnest. Upon which, notwithstanding their father was present, they fell to rallying one another between jest and earnest, a little too warmly, as follows:—

3rd Da. That may be; as my eldest sisters teach me, I hope they intend to set me a good example; for 'tis their turn first.

1st Da. We don't know that; if a good offer comes in your way, you'll hardly put it off, and say, Your betters must go before you.

3rd Da. For all you are both my eldest sisters, I question whether you understand what a good offer means; and, it may be, have considered it no more than I: there's a great deal in that word.

1st Da. O! I'll explain it in a few words: a good estate, and a man you like.

2nd Da. Nay, you might have stopped at the first: 'tis no matter what the man is, if the estate be but good.

3rd Da. Is that the example my eldest sisters intend to set me?

Fa. Aye, and a good example too, child.

3rd Da. You are disposed to jest, sir, but I believe you would not be pleased with such a way of choosing a husband for any of your daughters.

2nd Da. I hope my father would; I'm sure I should.

3rd Da. That's no token to me that you have considered much of the matter, as I said before.

2nd Da. Why, what yould you have besides a good estate? what matter is it what the man is? I would pass by a great many homely defects for a good settlement.

3rd Da. As for the homely defects, perhaps I may be no nicer than you, if there was nothing else wanting.

2nd Da. What can be wanting, if there be money enough?

3rd Da. Nothing, I hope, when my sister comes to choose.

2nd Da. No; nor when you come to choose neither, it may be.

3rd Da. I'm afraid there will.

2nd Da. For my part, I shall inquire for nothing else, as I know of.

3rd Da. No! what, would you have your husband have no religion?

2nd Da. What have I to do with his religion? he'll be a Christian I hope.

3rd Da. And what if he should not?

2nd Da. Nay, then he may be a heathen, an he will; what's that to me?

3rd Da. That's a proof of what I said before, that you have not considered much of the matter.

2nd Da. No, indeed, not I; but I suppose my younger sister has.

3rd Da. Your younger sister never told you so yet: but methinks there requires very little consideration to say, if I ever should marry, I would not have a rake, a heathen, a profligate fellow, a man without religion, purely for his money; if you think these things no objections, and are got over such scruples in the case, I must tell you, sister, that it seems the business has been more in your head than in mine, or at least to worse purpose.

2nd Da. Well, it may be so; and then it may follow, that when you have considered more of it too, you will be of my mind.

3rd Da. What, to marry an atheist! a man of no principles! that knows neither God nor Devil!

2nd Da. Aye, aye, that or anything else, if you have but a good settlement, child; a good settlemen will make up all those things: you'd take him, I warrant you.

3rd Da. No, sister; not for all I can see with my eyes

2nd Da. O, you don't know your own mind, till you come to be tried; we shall see you tell another tale hereafter.

3rd Da. I a'n't so fond of a husband, whatever my sister is.

(*Here the father, seeing that the younger sister began to be a little moved, and, unwilling they should make a quarrel of it, put an end to the discourse, and so they soon after withdrew; and then the father, being left with the eldest daughter only, went on with his discourse thus to her.*)

Fa Child, you are a little too hard upon your sister

Da. She should not have taken it so, sir; she knows it is but in jest.

Fa. But you do not know whether it may be all in jest or no.

Da. Nay, sir; I am sure all our share in it was in jest; if there is anything in it, I should have talked in another way.

(*Here she was very inquisitive with her father to know if there was anything in it or not, at which he only smiled.*)

Da. Nay, sir, then I understand how it is.

Fa. Well, child; how will you take it, to see your youngest sister married before you?

Da. O, very well, sir, I shall be very glad of it, if it be for her good: but if I were to speak my mind, I should say something to her about it, that, it may be, there may be occasion for.

Fa. Well, pray speak your mind then.

Da. Why, sir, for all my sister's bantering her, I must own, our youngest sister will not be easily pleased in a husband, as times go now.

Fa. How do you mean, child?

Da. Why, sir, I mean, that though she may be the first of us that shall be asked, she may be the last of us that will be married.

Fa. Ay, my girl! is it so with you then? what, have you been both making your bargains without me; and they are so near concluding? that's very hard.

Da. Dear father, how could you have such a thought of us! you are quite wrong; you don't understand me at all.

Fa. Nay, how can I understand you any other way? if it is not so, explain yourself.

Da. Sir, I mean that my sister will not be easily pleased; she will scarce take the first that comes, I dare say.

Fa. No; then I shall take it very ill: for, I assure you, he that I mean is a very good one.

Da. Nay, if he is a good one, it may be she may; but 'tis a question, sir, whether her good one and your good one may be both of a sort.

Fa. Why, he has a very good estate, I'll assure you; far beyond what she can expect.

Da. That's a good thing: but that will go but a little way with her, I know.

Fa. Well, he is a very handsome, well accomplished, well-bred gentleman; she cannot mislike him; he is a most agreeable young gentleman, I assure you.

Da. That won't go a bit the further with her, neither, I am sure.

Fa. Then he is in love with her, and has singled her out from you all; she will be the wife of his affection, to be sure; what can she desire more?

Da. She will desire something more, still, sir, though the last is a thing will go very far; doubtless, further than anything we have talked on yet: but you know, sir, my sister is a very sober, religious body, and she will never marry any man that is not so too, though his estate, his person, his accomplishments, were beyond all the rest of the world; and this was the reason why I said she may be first asked and last married.

Fa. Nay, I can't tell how matters are as to that.

Da. I'll assure you, sir, she will know how it is as to that, before she engages.

Fa. Nay, let her alone to that part, that's none of my business.

(*Here he was touched a little, and reflected back softly to himself; O why do I say 'tis none of my business? Whose business is it, if it is not mine?*)

Da. But, sir, when you know her mind in that

case, it may prevent your receiving any disappointment, and prevent her venturing to disoblige you in refusing what you may propose to her.

Fa. No, no; I dare say she wont refuse him; she is not such a fool neither.

Da. Dear sir, then I hope you know he is a sober religious gentleman?

Fa. I know nothing to the contrary, my dear; I suppose he is.

Da. But, sir, it makes me anxious about it, because you said just now you could not tell: I hope you will inquire further into it before you take any further steps about it.

Fa. Why, child, as to that, I dare say she need not be concerned; he is so good a humoured man, he will never cross her in small matters, especially in religious things. Child, do you think any gentleman can be angry that his wife is sober and religious? To be sure she may be as religious as she will.

Da. O dear sir, my sister can never be satisfied so, sure.

(*He observes his daughter concerned at it, and that tears stood in her eyes.*)

Fa. Child, what's the matter? What makes you so concerned about it?

Da. 'Tis a sad life, sir, for a woman to have no help from her husband in things that are good, but only to have liberty for herself to be as good as she will, or rather as good as she can: by the same rule she may be as bad as she will; and it may be, he will like her ne'er the better for the one, nor the worse for t'other.

Fa. Well, he is a fine gentleman, and professes a great affection for her.

Da. Before he has seen her, it may be, or knows anything of her.

Fa. No, no; he has seen her, but he has never been in her company, I know.

Da. So that I find he cares not what she is; he chooses by her outside only.

Fa. He takes all the rest upon trust.

Da. But my sister won't take him so, I can tell him that.

Fa. I shall take it very ill from her if she slights him; for I assure you he is not to be slighted, he has very near 2000*l.* a year estate.

Da. But I am sure, if he is not a religious man, she will slight him for all that; my meaning is, she will never have him; I suppose she will not be rude to him.

Fa. If she does refuse him, she and I shall quarrel, I assure you, and that very much.

Da. I hope you won't, sir: you will give her leave to choose to her own liking; it is for her life, and she must bear the discontent of it; nobody can bear it for her: besides, sir, you know she was very religiously instructed by my mother.

Fa. Ay, ay; your mother was a good woman.

Da. And you know, sir, I suppose, what advice my mother gave her upon her death-bed, viz., never to marry a man that was not religious, whatever other advantages might offer with him.

Fa. And did she not give you the same advice too, my dear?

Da. Yes, to be sure, and all of us.

Fa. Well; and yet you heard what your sister said just now, viz., that she would not trouble herself about it, so there was but a good estate.

Da. But I hope my sister would consider better, if she came to the question.

Fa. Why, child, would you refuse such a gentleman, and such a settlement as this is, that offers now to your sister, for such a nicety as that?

Da. It will be time enough, sir, for me to answer that question, when I am offered such a one; there's no danger of me yet.

Fa. I hope you would be wiser.

Da. I hope, sir, I should act as becomes me: but the case is not mine now; if it was, I should not have begun the discourse.

Fa. Well; but did your mother give you such advice, child, when she was ill?

Da. Yes, sir; and more than advice: for she told us, she would leave it as an injunction upon us, as far as her dying words could have any influence to oblige us.

Fa. Very well: that is as much as to say, she had found the inconvenience of it herself.

(*Here his conscience touched him again, though but slightly, and he fetched a sigh, and said softly, If she did, it was nothing but what she had too much reason to do; for she lived but an uncomfortable life with me on that very account.*)

Da. Nay, indeed, dear father, we never put any such construction upon it.

Fa. And so, my dear, you think your sister will not like this gentleman, do you?

Da. Indeed, sir, I cannot tell, till I know what kind of a gentleman he is; no, nor then neither; for how can I tell what my sister will like, or how her fancy may lead her to act against her judgment, if she should like him very well upon seeing him?

Fa. But you believe she won't.

Da. If he is not a very sober religious man, I do think she won't; if she does, she must break in upon the most solemn resolutions that she is able to make.

Fa. Why, will nothing serve her but a saint? Alas! where does she think to find him! What! would she marry a bishop?

Da. Nay, sir, if she should, she is not sure she should not be disappointed; ministers are but men.

Fa. No, indeed, child; nor always the best of men neither.

Da. But, sir, where there is a profession of religion, there is some likelihood of finding the truth of it; but where there is no profession, there it cannot be. Now though we are not obliged to be sure our husbands should be saints, yet I believe we ought to be satisfied that they are not atheists: there's a great deal of difference, sir, between a friend to religion, and an enemy.

Fa. Well, well; the girls of this age do not much trouble themselves about religion; they generally let it alone, till they see what religion their husbands are of.

Da. Dear father, I hope your girls are not of that sort.

Fa. My daughters are like other folks' daughters, I believe; I hope they are not worse.

Da. But, sir, if that were true, then there would still be the more reason to take care that they should marry religious husbands, else they would have no religion at all.

Fa. But how shall you know it?

Da. We must endeavour to be satisfied as well as we can; if we are deceived, it may be our unhappiness, but will not be our fault; but if we neglect the caution, it may be a double misery, by its being our sorrow, and our sin too.

Fa. Well, child, I hope this gentleman will please your sister as well as he does me, and I would not have her stand in her own light: if he is not so religious now, it may come afterwards: the man is a sober, well-bred, ingenuous gentleman.

Da. I can say nothing to it, sir, unless I knew

him: I only take notice of the principle, sir, on which my sister goes, and by which I am sure she will act in this matter, that you may not be disappointed, and resent it; for I know she will not go from it.

Fa. I'll warrant you: I intend to talk with her about it; I don't doubt but she will like him very well.

[Two or three days after this discourse the father brings home this young gentleman to dinner, and after dinner he takes occasion to talk with his daughter, and to tell her that this was the gentleman that he had told her of, that intended to court her, and that he expected she would think of the thing, and receive him as her own inclinations and his merit should direct.

The gentleman did not discourse much with her by herself that time, having no design to begin closely at the first view; however, he had the opportunity of walking two or three turns with her in a green walk in the garden, and, when he took his leave, told her he resolved to wait on her again; to which she made him no answer for that time.

The next evening he came again, and after that for several evenings together, when having made her acquainted with his design, and laid close siege to her for some time, she found nothing to object against him; for he was, indeed, a most agreeable person, and her father pressing her to it on the other hand, and letting her know what honourable proposals he had made her, and how he had singled her out from all her sisters as the object of his choice, she began insensibly to find her affections very strongly biassed in his favour.

All this while she could make no discovery of anything about religion in him, nor so much as whether he was well inclined or perfectly destitute.

The respect he showed her, and the distance she kept him at, permitted him not to use any loose expressions that might give her any light into his principles; and, as he afterwards confessed, he found her so nice in things of that kind, that the least dislocated word would have given her an offence; and therefore he kept upon his guard a great while, till at length, when they became more intimate, he abated his usual caution.

By this time, as she confessed to her sister, she did not only like him, but really loved him; and having nothing to object against him, had given him reason to see, that she designed to have him; but she was under a great concern how to know what he was as to religion; and terribly afraid lest she should give her affection such a loose, that though she should be deceived in the main point, she should not be able to master herself so much as to go back. As she was musing very seriously upon this one morning in her chamber, her eldest sister came in to her, and began the following discourse with her.]

Eld. Sist. Sister! How stands the world with you now?

Yo. Sist. Never worse, sister. If you do not help me, I am undone.

Eld. Sist. What's the matter?

Yo. Sist. Why, if I have this man, I shall be the misearablest creature alive.

Eld. Sist. How so?

Yo. Sist. O! there's nothing of religion in him.

Eld. Sist. Are you sure there is not?

Yo. Sist. No, I am not sure; but we have conversed this month now, and I never heard one word about it come out of his mouth; and if I speak a word, he turns it off, and does it so cleverly, that I can't put in another word for my life.

Eld. Sist. I warrant you, I would find it out if it were my case.

Yo. Sist. You could not, I am sure.

Eld. Sist. Why, I would ask him point blank what religion he was of.

Yo. Sist. Why, so I did, and he laughed at me, and said, O child, I am a mighty good Christian.

Eld. Sist. I should have told him I was afraid he was not.

Yo. Sist. Why, I did that too, in the very words; and still he put me off. Another time I asked him if he was not a papist? Immediately he fell a crossing himself all over, and made himself and me so merry at it, that though I was really troubled about it, I could not for my life get the least serious thing out of him.

Eld. Sist. Why you must let it go on a little further, till you are more intimate; and till you come to talk of your way of living, the affairs of his family, and house, and the like.

Yo. Sist. Really, sister, I am afraid to go on any further, for, I must confess, I begin to have a strange kindness for him; and if I go any further I may love him better, till my affection may be a snare to me, and I may be prevailed with to take him without further inquiry, which I shall have no peace in.

Eld. Sist. What will you do then?

Yo. Sist. I know not what to do. I wish you would try what you can make of him; you are free enough with him to talk anything of that kind, sure.

Eld. Sist. I can be free enough, but that won't do it; if he is too cunning for you, he will easily be too cunning for me.

Yo. Sist. Why, do you think then that it is a disguise?

Eld. Sist. What else can it be? Do you think

he guards himself so strictly against all your attempts for nothing?

Yo. Sist. If I thought so, I should inquire no further; it would be a plain discovery to me.

Eld. Sist. Why so?

Yo. Sist. Why, if he was a serious religious person, he would have no reason or occasion to conceal it; if he endeavours to hide himself, it is for something that he would not have known, and then I need not ask any more after it.

Eld. Sist. No doubt of it; you cannot think any other.

Yo. Sist. But, indeed, I do think otherwise: I verily believe it is all mere nature, and nothing but the height of good humour; for I have never put the question downright to him, but in a kind of jesting way.

Eld. Sist. But why don't you then? Why do you trifle and dally so long with a thing of such consequence? You an't afraid of disobliging him, are you?

Yo. Sist. No, indeed; I am more afraid that his answer will disoblige me.

Eld. Sist. Well, well; you had better have it discoursed now, than hereafter; I would not be backward to speak plain to him.

Yo. Sist. If I talk never so plain, he will not give a serious answer; he is so merry, I cannot bring him to talk; I beg you will see if you can break in upon him.

Eld. Sist. Come, I'll tell you what I will do, which will be better a great deal than my talking with him by myself. You know we shall walk all together awhile after supper; I'll begin it before you, and you may speak or not speak, take it in jest or in earnest, as you find it proper.

Yo. Sist. Do then; I think that will be very well.

[The next evening the two sisters and this young gentleman walking in the garden, as was usual after supper, and talking of several indifferent things, a servant brings the eldest sister a letter, which made some little stop in their walk. She opened it, and read it; and he finding her colour change a little in the reading, stepped up to her; says he, What's the matter, sister? (for he always called her sister;) you have no bad news, I hope? Truly, says she, one way 'tis no bad news, and another way 'tis. And turning to her sister, she says, Sir James is dead. He was a little concerned to hear some of the family was dead, lest it should grieve his mistress. But she, without any appearance of trouble, returned, Well, since 'tis the disposal of Providence, I am not grieved; for my aunt is delivered from one of the worst good husbands that ever a sober woman had. He took hold of that word presently, and still directing his speech to his sister, said, Worst good husbands! What mystery is that? Why truly, says the sister, the thing is too true. Sir James was a very good husband in his humour, and in several other things; but my lady had a dreadful life with him. Why, says he, that may be very true; a man may be a very good husband in one thing, and be very unkind in another; 'tis owing much to the disagreement of tempers. The young lady's sister was disappointed in his answer; for she expected he would have inquired into the particulars, but he put it off as a thing that did not concern him much; at which the youngest sister looked at her, and smiled, which was as much as to tell her that she had found now that what she had told her was true; namely,

that she would not see it easy to break in upon him. She took the hint, and resolved she would try the best of her skill, and she found it soon answered her end; so she returned to him very smartly, No, no, sir, says she, it was not at all from disagreement of temper in this case; it was worse a great deal, it was disagreement of principles, for the gentleman was of a very good temper, I assure you. Then if he had a good wife, returns he, he should have made it his first principle to have been obliging and good-tempered to his wife. Alas! says the lady, he had no religion, and she is the most pious religious lady in the world. It may be then, says he, she had enough for her and her husband too. Her being religious, said she, made his want of it an unsufferable burden to her. Then she was to blame, says he, for what need she have been uneasy at that? Not uneasy! says she; How is it possible a religious woman can live comfortably with an irreligious profane husband! O, very well, says he again; what signifies it to a woman whether her husband has any religion or no? I have better thoughts of you, says she, than to believe you speak as you think, that you would be understood so.

Her sister had listened very attentively to all this, and was sensibly affected with it, but said nothing till now, when she turned upon her sister; Why sister, said she, should you think so? I hope Mr.—— says nothing but what he is very sincere in. Do you think he has not his religion to choose as well as other young gentlemen? Madam, says he, how should I choose my religion, that have not chosen me a wife? Then you are for choosing you a wife first, says his mistress, and your religion afterwards? Why madam, says he, don't all the gentlemen in England

do so too? I don't know what they do, says she, but I know what they ought to do.

She was now too well satisfied of what she feared before, and her mind was so oppressed with it that that she was not able to hold; but making an excuse to take her sister's letter, and go in and tell her father the news of the death of his brother-in-law, she left her sister to walk with her lover, and went up into her chamber, and locking herself in, she gave vent to her passions by crying vehemently a great while: when she had recovered herself, and considered that she was obliged in civility to go down again, she composed her thoughts, and kneeling down, prayed to God to fortify her soul in the resolutions she had always taken, never to join herself to any man that did not acknowledge God, and profess to fear and serve him; and in this temper she went down to him again.

She was with him after that some hours in the evening, as usual; but he observed she was not easy nor free: at length she told him, that upon this occasion of a relation being dead, it was proper for the family, and decent to their father, that they should make some little alteration in their conduct, and desired he would not take it ill that she retired from him sooner than she used to do. This he could not object against, and accordingly he took his leave, believing that her uneasiness was nothing but the business of her aunt's being a widow, which though, as she said, she was not much concerned for, yet several things about it might take up her thoughts, so as to make her not so perfectly easy, or so good company, as she was before.

But he was quite out in his guess; for her uneasiness was of another kind, and she had nothing now lay upon her mind, but how she should discharge

herself entirely of his importunities, and yet without being rude and uncivil to him, and without disobliging her father; for she was firmly resolved in her mind never to see him more.

When she had thus taken her leave of him, she went up into her chamber, sending her maid to desire her sister to come up, and ordering the servant to excuse her to her father for not coming to supper, for she was indisposed.

As soon as her sister came into her chamber, she ran to her in the greatest passion imaginable, and throwing her arms about her neck, O sister, says she, help me but out of this wretched business, and I'll never come into the like as long as I live: she said no more, but hung about her, crying violently a great while.

Sist. What can I do for you, child? you know I'll do anything I can.

Yo. Sist. Don't you see how it is now? was I not right in my suspicion?

Sist. I am afraid you are: I don't know what to say to it.

Yo. Sist. Say to it! I would not marry him if he was lord high treasurer of Britain.

Sist. What will you do then? how will you put him off?

Yo. Sist. Put him off! let him put himself off, an' he will; I have no more to say to him.

Sist. Nay, you must have more to say to him, you must tell him so.

Yo. Sist. Not I; I'll never see him more.

Sist. Child, you must not be rude to him; you don't want manners.

Yo. Sist. I would not be rude to him; that's it I want your help for.

Sist. What can I do in it? I cannot go down to him when he comes, and tell him you will see him

no more; you cannot desire me to carry such a message.

Yo. Sist. No, that's true, I can't; I know not what to do, not I.

Sist. Shall I speak to my father to do it?

Yo. Sist. I think my father is the fittest to give him his answer; he brought him first on, and I think he should put him off.

Sist. But he will be in such a rage, I hardly dare speak of it to him.

Yo. Sist. Dear sister, he won't be angry with you, his anger will be all at me.

Sist. You know, sister, my father's infirmity, that if he is angry with anybody, he is angry with every body; I know he'll use me very ill if I break it to him.

Yo. Sist. What shall I do then? I'll be gone, if I never come home again while I live.

Sist. No, no; you shan't be gone; whither will you go?

Yo. Sist. I beg of you, sister, speak to my father about it.

Sist. What shall I say, if he calls for you? will you come down?

Yo. Sist. If I must I will; but keep it off if you can.

(*The eldest daughter goes down to her father a little before supper; and as soon as he saw her, he began the discourse.*)

Fa. Child, what's the matter with your sister? her maid tells me she is not well: have you seen her?

Da. Yes, sir; I came just from her; she is not very well.

Fa. What ails her? she must not be sick now, whatever she does; why, it's ominous to be sick when she is wooing.

Da. I believe she is sicker of that, than of anything else, sir; if she was delivered from her gentleman she would be well enough.

Fa. What do you mean! why I intend they shall be married the week after next: the writings are a-drawing, and I designed by and by to have given her an hundred pounds towards buying her wedding-clothes.

Da. You may adjourn that awhile, sir, she has changed her mind.

Fa. Changed her mind! what do you mean?

(*The father rises up in a great passion, and walks about the room.*)

Da. Dear father, do not be angry with me; 'tis no business of mine; I had rather say no more of it, for I see it will put you in a passion: but why should you be in a passion with me?

Fa. Not in a passion! who can but be in a passion with all of you! Changed her mind, say you! Ay, and I'll change my mind too; I'll never give her a groat, no, not a shilling, to any other man, than I'll promise her.

Da. I dare say, sir, she has no other man in her view.

Fa. What does she mean then! is she mad! to ruin herself thus, and stand in her own light? Does she ever expect to have such another offer?

Da. No, I believe not, sir; nor does she desire it.

Fa. No, nor never shall; I'll marry again, as old as I am, and give away what I have to strangers, before I'll give it to children that shall treat me thus.

Da. Will you punish, sir, the innocent with the guilty?

Fa. Why, you are all guilty, for aught I know:

what do you come with such a story for? where is she? call her down.

Da. Sir, she is very much indisposed; if you would please to let her alone till to-morrow, she may be better able to speak for herself, and you may not be so much in a passion with her.

Fa. Well, let her alone till morning, then; I suppose she'll change her mind again by that time.

Da. I am sorry, sir, to see you take it so ill of her; but I dare say she will be the same to-morrow, and as long as she lives.

Fa. Well, then I'll be of the same mind too, to-morrow.

The eldest sister went up, after supper, to her sister's chamber, who waited for her impatient enough. As soon as she came, she gave her sister an account of what discourse she had had with her father, and how angry he was; which, though it terrified and afflicted her very much, yet it did not move her at all to alter her resolutions; and she endeavoured, as well as she could, to furnish herself with answers to give her father when he should begin with her. But whether it was, that her father was impatient to hear what she had to say, or that she believing he would not meddle with it till morning, came unwarily in his way, is not material; but happening to see her the same night, he called her in to him, and told her he wanted to speak with her.

He began very mildly with her, which a little encouraged her; for she was something surprised at his beginning to talk before she expected it and taking her by the arm, feels for her pulse. What's the matter with you, child? says her father; they

told me you wasn't well; I think your pulse beats very true.

Da. I am better, sir, now; but I was very much out of order.

Fa. Only a little in love, my dear: that's all, I hope.

Da. No, indeed, sir; the contrary, to an extreme, as I suppose my sister has told you.

Fa. Your sister, child! I can lay no stress on anything she said; I cannot tell whether she was in jest or in earnest.

Da. Sir, I am very sorry that what she said is disobliging, and more, that it should put you into a passion: I hope, when you consider of it, you will be of the same mind with me.

Fa. What do you mean, child, by the same mind; I have recommended a gentleman to you, whom you can have no objection against, and his estate is double to what you can expect: you told me yourself that you had no objection against his person, and he has made you his choice, and is in love with you above all your sisters; what can you desire more?

Da. All that you say, sir, is true; and for his person, and estate, they are both better than I ought to expect, but—

Fa. But what? Pry'thee, child, don't bring any of your canting scruples to me, I'll hear none of your buts.

Da. It was my fear that you would be in a passion, sir, and would not hear me. [*She cries.*]

Fa. What father can bear to be so treated, and not be in a passion? What would you have me hear?

Da. Sir, I would have you hear the reasons why I cannot comply.

Fa. It is enough to me to hear you cannot: the

reasons I have for the match are good; you acknowledge the gentleman is agreeable, you cannot say that you cannot love him, and I am sure then you cannot give a good reason against it; and therefore I expect you go on with it: I have appointed the week after next for your wedding: and here, there's some money to buy you clothes. [*Holds out a bank bill to her.*]

Da. Sir, I beg you will not take it ill, that I cannot do it. [*She pulls back her hand from the bill.*]

Fa. What do you mean? I advise you not to play the fool with me any longer.

(*Here the father being in a great passion, her sister, who was in pain for her, hearing him loud, came in, which greatly encouraged her; and she spoke, though very respectfully, to her father, yet with great plainness.*)

Da. Sir, this seems to be a hardship that never was put upon any one before: if I was going to marry any one you did not like, it was no doubt in your power to command me not to do it; but I cannot think you ought to command me to marry any man against my will.

Fa. I have a great many reasons why I ought to expect your compliance in this, and you know my reasons are good.

Da. You cannot then but think, sir, that I have some reasons against it, or I should comply with my father; for I never disobeyed you before, and why should not my reasons be heard?

Fa. I know you can have no reasons that are sufficient.

Da. Will you please to let any one else be judge of that for me?

Fa. I will have no arbitrators between me and my children.

Da. I cannot help myself in that.

Fa. My dispute with you is short: will you have this gentleman, or no?

Da. If it was not to my father, I should give a different answer; but I desire to say nothing that may displease you.

Fa. I can't be displeased with words so much as I am by actions; the gentleman has made his way through everything, made proposals too great for any father to refuse; you have entertained him, showed him a great deal of respect, and now to treat him thus, and treat your father thus, 'tis intolerable.

Da. When the gentleman and you treated of this matter, it was without me; I had no knowledge of it, neither was it my part to be concerned.

Fa. Well, I know that.

Da. After you were agreed, you bring him to me: I suppose this to be, that I might converse with him, and see if I liked to make him my choice: if this was not the case, you might as well, by your command, have ordered me to marry him the first day, as now.

Fa. Well, what do you make of all this?

Da. Upon frequent visits made me, I found nothing disagreeable in him, and showed him as much respect as was my part; I hope I have not showed him more than became me.

Fa. Yes, truly, if you resolve not to have him.

Da. Let him reproach me with that if he can.

Fa. Why should you have entertained him at all, if you resolved not to have him?

Da. I did not for some time resolve not to have him, till I discovered him further; and it was your command that put me first upon the trial, and my reasons now against it are good, if you please to hear them patiently: but I'll rather bear all you

please to lay on me, than put you into passions at me.

Fa. I desire no reasons, nor no discourse; answer me the question in short, whether you will have him or no? it will raise my passion less than your impertinent reasons.

Da. If it must be so, sir, without hearing any reasons, then my answer is, No, never while I live; and I leave my reasons for it to him that judges righteous judgment.

Fa. Then from this time forward you are no relation of mine, any more than my cook-maid.

(*The young lady was too full to say any more, and went out of the room while he was speaking.*)

Eld. Da. Dear father, do not say so.

Fa. Nay, 'tis no matter whether she heard me or no; I'll keep my promise with her.

Eld. Da. I hope you won't, sir; it may be my sister may be better advised, or you may be further satisfied of her reasons.

Fa. I know her reasons well enough; he is not hypocrite enough for her, I suppose; if a fawning, smooth-tongued fellow, would come and talk Scripture to her, she would take him presently; she does not know what religion is.

Eld. Da. Sir, if that were true, she would have stronger reasons for desiring a religious husband than she may have now, that she might have a kind instructor to assist her: we have all need of helps, that way, at least; we need no profane husbands to keep us back: a loose, irreligious husband, is a dreadful snare.

This was a night of passion, and little was done all the evening by the father but to make work for repentance. He was so provoked at his daughter,

that he made terrible resolutions against her: that he would never give her a farthing; that he would turn her out of doors; that she should go to service; that he would make his will, and whatever he left to the rest of his children, it should be upon condition that they should never relieve her, nor own her, nor call her sister, and that if they did, what they had should go to his eldest son, and the like.

He was so disturbed, that he got but little sleep all night, and in the morning he was obliged to go out of town early to his sister's, about forty miles off, whose husband was just dead, so that he did not see his youngest daughter any more before he went; but just as he was stepping into his chariot he called, his eldest daughter to him, What, says he, child, is to be done in the affair while I am gone? she won't be so rude to turn him off while I am away, will she? Indeed, sir, says the daughter, I am perplexed about it; I know not how it will be managed, but I believe she will see him no more. Not see him! says the father, that's the unmannerliest thing in the world: sure she won't be so rude to me; she might give me the opportunity to put an end to it handsomely; pray tell her I expect it; and, I assure you, if she refuses to see him till my return, I'll never see her more as long as I live.

In this temper the father went away: the eldest daughter, poor lady, had her heart full with such a message, and scarce knew how to deliver it; however, upon talking further with her sister the same morning, and finding her inflexible, and perhaps more stiff than she thought she needed to be, she did at last deliver it; their dialogue was short, but effectual, as follows:—

Eld. Sist. Dear sister, what will you do in this matter? my father is gone.

Yo. Sist. What can I do? I think my father is very unkind to me.

Eld. Sist. My father is passionate, you know.

Yo. Sist. But not to hear me, not to ask my reason, this is very hard! Do any fathers marry their daughters by force?

Eld. Sist. Why, I'll tell you what my father says to that: he says he knows your reasons beforehand, and he thinks them of no weight.

Yo. Sist. Dear sister, do you think them of no moment?

Eld. Sist. It's hard for a daughter to make herself judge between her father and the rest of his children; I am sorry you are so hard pushed at.

Yo. Sist. What would you do in my case?

Eld. Sist. Indeed that's hard to say too; I would act as my conscience should tell me was my duty; I confess there is a powerful force in a father's command.

Yo. Sist. No father can command counter to God's command.

Eld. Sist. That's true, my dear; but consider, child, how far God's command lies on you here: I know your text, *Be not unequally yoked*: and I remember my dear mother's words, that this cannot be understood of anything but a religious person marrying with a profane.

Yo. Sist. Well, sister; and you remember the charge she gave us, and the promise we made her: I look upon these things to be very binding in themselves, and very sacred engagements.

Eld. Sist. They are binding, indeed, to what is our duty at the same time, and they add force to it; otherwise the case would differ.

Yo. Sist. Just so I understand it; and, I am sure, reason, experience, and the nature of the thing, join with it: what a wretched house must

there be, whether it be the man or the woman's case, where one is a Christian and t'other an infidel; one devout, the other profane; one pious and religious, and the other knowing or valuing nothing that is serious! what helps to heaven are such to one another! For my part, I need no wicked discouragements to pull me back in my duty, no ill examples to allure me to folly; I want all the assistance possible the other way.

Eld. Sist. You preach like an oracle, child; I cannot oppose one word you say: but what must you do? you heard what sad, rash resolutions my father made.

Yo. Sist. No, I did not hear them; and I am glad I did not: but, as I am sure I am right, I must do my duty, and trust Providence; if my father does not do the duty of his relation to me, I'll pray to God to forgive him.

Eld. Sist. Well, but what will you do with Mr. ——?

Yo. Sist. I have no thought about him now; I am pretty well over it.

Eld. Sist. But you must not be rude to him, even upon my father's account.

Yo. Sist. Nay, I would not be rude to him for his own sake, for I have no quarrel at him.

Eld. Sist. How will you avoid it, if you do not see him?

Yo. Sist. See him! I would not venture to see him upon any account.

Eld. Sist. Child, what do you call venture? you are undone if you don't see him.

Yo. Sist. I dare not trust myself to see him: I am pretty well over it now, but if I see him again I know not what influence my own weakness may have upon my resolution; for I must own to you, sister, I have no aversion to him.

Eld. Sist. You might as well say you own you love him.

Yo. Sist. Well, if I should own it, perhaps it might bear being called so; is it not better, then, that I should avoid the struggle between conscience and affection?

Eld. Sist. But I have a strong fancy that you ought to enter into a closer discourse with him upon this matter; I think you do not do either him or yourself justice else: for, first, perhaps you may find, that though he talked loosely then, when he did not know, perhaps, whether we were in jest or in earnest, yet if you talked seriously with him of the main point yourself, (for you know our discourse was at a distance, and was rather a kind of civil raillery than argument,) you may find one of these two things will happen, viz., either he will talk seriously, and let you see that he has a bottom of religious, good sentiments, which is all you ought to insist upon, and would be a happy discovery on your side; or talk profanely, and be self-convicted.

Yo. Sist. There is more weight in this, than in all you have said yet; but I can never do it.

Eld. Sist. Well; let me add to it, what I was loath to tell you, and that is, what my father said just now when he went away.

(*She tells her father's words, which staggers her resolution.*)

Yo. Sist. My father uses me very hardly.

Eld. Sist. I am sorry for it; but it is in nobody's power to help it: he would be the same to any of us.

Yo. Sist. What would you advise me to do then?

Eld. Sist. Truly, if I might advise you, I would have you see him once more.

Yo. Sist. To what purpose?

Eld. Sist. Why, if it be only to try whether what he said before was in jest or in earnest.

Yo. Sist. I think the discovery is not worth the compliment.

Eld. Sist. Really, I can't say that. Would you be contented to have it true that he is a sober and religious inclined gentleman?

Yo. Sist. Yes, with all my heart.

Eld. Sist. Is not an estate of near 2000*l.* a year, and an agreeable gentleman, very suitable, when 'tis joined with a good Christian?

Yo. Sist. I allow it all.

Eld. Sist. Well; and you have really not made trial enough, to resolve whether it be so or not?

Yo. Sist. So you would have me see him once more, to try if I can persuade myself to be cheated?

Eld. Sist. That's unkind: would I have you to be cheated! no, far be it from me! but I would have you leave no room to blame yourself hereafter.

Yo. Sist. You almost persuade me to let him come to-night; but if he does, I shall be very ill-natured to him: I question whether I shall be civil to him, or no.

Eld. Sist. That is not my proposal; you may do it, and be very civil and obliging too, let the thing take a turn which way it will; and I wish you would try.

Yo. Sist. Well, I think, I will venture then.

The end of the first dialogue.

DIALOGUE II.

The young lady having resolved to see her gentleman once more, at the persuasion of her sister, there needed nothing to be done but to sit still till evening, when he was sure to come. It seems she had resolved to send a footman to him, to tell him she was gone out of town for two or three days, and so to prevent his coming, till her father should tell him in general, that it could not be a match; and to make it good, she had ordered her father's coach to be ready to carry her to Hampstead, to an uncle's house she had there; but on this occasion she deferred it, and in the evening he came, as usual, to wait on her. It would not perhaps be possible to set down the particulars of the courtship of this night, there being a great deal of variety in it, and nobody present but themselves: but the best account we have of it being from her own mouth, I have set it down as she related it to her sister in the following dialogue.

As soon as the gentleman was gone, which, his entertainment not being much to his mind, was some hours sooner than usual, she came directly to her sister, who was expecting her with the utmost impatience, though she did not look for her so soon as she came neither; the following dialogue will give an idea of the whole.

As soon as she came to her sister, she prevented her thus:—

Well, sister, you have a nice guess with you; 'tis all as you said, and the business is now all done and over.

1*st Sist.* Well, before I enter into particulars, are you pleased and satisfied?

3rd Sist. Perfectly satisfied and pleased.

1st Sist. Are you pleased that you have seen him?

3rd Sist. Thoroughly pleased: I would not but have seen him again for any good.

1st Sist. Is it as you expected?

3rd Sist. Ay, ay, just as I expected; a true gentleman, perfectly educated, politely bred, that knows about as much of religion as a parson's horse, that is to say, knows the way to the church door, but scorns to debauch his breeding with such a clumsy thing as religion; is more a gentleman, than to trouble himself with the meanness of religion, and not hypocrite enough to pretend to the sublimer parts of it; one that has not been long enough in this world to think of the next, nor is yet come to any resolution about when he shall.

1st Sist. I am sorry for it; I assure you it is not as I expected.

3rd Sist. But it is as I expected, I assure you.

1st Sist. Well, but though it is, I believe you are not sorry you met him.

3rd Sist. No, no, not at all, I assure you; I am much the better satisfied that I have now the open declarations of it from his own mouth.

1st Sist. You surprise me; I thought he had had more policy than so.

3rd Sist. I assure you, as I told you, he is no hypocrite; he is not ashamed to be believed to be full as bad as he is, and made no doubt but I would like him the better for it.

1st Sist. That's hard another way; he could not think you were so too, sure.

3rd Sist. Why he does not think he does anything amiss, I assure you; and takes it ill to be thought mistaken.

1st Sist. I can scarce form all this in my mind;

I wish you would tell me some of the history of this night's salutation, now 'tis so fresh in your thoughts.

3rd Sist. With all my heart; but it will be a long story.

1st Sist. No matter for that; it will be the more profitable, and, I dare say, not the less diverting.

3rd Sist. Why after we had been together about half an hour, he seemed to recollect himself, and told me he asked my pardon that he had not condoled with me for the loss of my uncle sir James ——; I told him, he need not, for the loss was not so great. He replied, he thought I appeared very much concerned at it last night, which made him withdraw sooner than he intended. I told him I was thoughtful indeed, but not so much about that; for though I believed my aunt was very sorry for his death, yet I thought she had no great reason; for I was sure she lived a very uncomfortable life with him. He wanted then very much to know what I was so thoughtful about, if I was not troubled at the loss of my uncle: I declined telling him, but did it in a way that I intended should prompt his curiosity; for I desired nothing more than to have a fair opportunity to tell him very plainly what troubled me; and he soon gave it me. He told me he took himself to be so much interested in me now, as to be concerned in all my griefs; and he claimed to know if anything afflicted me, that he might bear his share in it; and added something so handsome and so obliging on that head, that I must acknowledge it shook my resolution very much; and I had almost given over my design; but I recovered myself again in a moment or two.

1st Sist. Indeed you are a resolute girl; I think what you repeat of him was engaging.

3rd Sist. I told him it was natural for people to make sudden transitions from other people's case to their own, and that indeed that was the occasion that made me so uneasy: I knew my aunt was a lady of great piety and virtue, that every one knew to be exceeding religious and serious: that on the other hand, sir James was a mad, frolicsome, merry fellow, that neither understood any religion, or troubled himself about it, but would play a thousand mad tricks with her, because of her strict observation of religious things; and that this gave her a constant uneasiness. He smiled, and said he hoped I was not afraid of him on that score; For, madam, says he, though I pretend to no religion myself, I cannot but respect them that do. This was the first, and I think a considerable confirmation of what we had said before; was it not, sister?

1st Sist. I am sorry to hear it; but I'll tell you, however, there was one thing that I observe to be a good foundation for religion, viz., that he respected them that were religious.

3rd Sist. Ay, sister; but we did not end here: I told him I was very sorry to hear him say he had no religion himself; because, as perhaps I had not a great deal, to marry a man that had none would endanger my losing what I had; and I should rather have a husband to help me on towards heaven, than pull me back.

1st Sist. What could he say to that?

3rd Sist. He told me he did not doubt but I would go to heaven without his help; he said jestingly, it was a road he had never travelled; but I might be assured he would not willingly pull me back, if he did not help me on.

1st Sist. Well, there was something very honest in that too.

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3rd Sist. That's true, sister; but negative religion is but a poor stock to begin on.

1st Sist. But 'tis better than a despiser of religion: you ought to have acknowledged what good you found.

3rd Sist. My designs lay another way; I aimed at a fuller discovery, and I soon had it.

1st Sist. Well, go on then.

3rd Sist. I told him what tricks my uncle used to serve my aunt; how he got a book of devotion out of her closet once, and got a long printed story about ducking a scold pasted into it; and another time got the ballad of Chevy Chace bound into her Psalm-book; how, when he knew she was in her closet at her devotion, he would bring his huntsman to feed the hounds just under her window; and how one time he made a fellow cry fire, and the like; as you know, sister, he played many such pranks, and would do anything to put her thoughts into disorder. He told me, though he was but a young fellow, and had not troubled his thoughts much about religion, (there was another stab to my affections, sister,) yet he said he could not bear to make a jest of it neither.

1st Sist. Well, but that was another word in his favour too.

3rd Sist. I replied, I was very sorry to hear him own that he had not troubled his thoughts about religion, and asked him upon what foundation he could think of setting up a family, if that was his case? He told me he kept a chaplain, and jestingly told me, he was devout enough for all the rest of the house. I grew chagrin and dull; I told him that these things had filled me with very sad thoughts about marrying, and it looked very dismal to me. But all I could say could not bring him to believe I was in earnest.

1st Sist. I believe he is really very good humoured.

3rd Sist. Ay, sister, that's true; but I look for something further in a husband, or I am resolved I'll have no husband at all.

1st Sist. Well, but pray go on with your story; what answer did he make?

3rd Sist. He laughed at me, and told me he believed marrying would make him mighty religious; that he would choose a wife first, and then choose his religion.

1st Sist. The man was mad, sure, to open himself so fully.

3rd Sist. I appeared then really disturbed; and, whether he perceived it or no, I am sure the tears stood in my eyes: however, I struggled with my disorder, and told him I was very sorry, then, that it was his misfortune to begin with one that could not be content to marry upon those terms, and hoped, when he was fully satisfied of the reason of such a resolution in me, he would not take it ill that I would stay for him till he had resolved more seriously upon a thing of so much more importance.

1st Sist. That was very cunningly answered.

3rd Sist. Then he began to think I was in earnest, and told me he hoped I would not talk so, because it might be longer than he desired to be without me.

1st Sist. That was still making the case worse; for it was as much as to say, he neither had any religion, nor intended to have any.

3rd Sist. I did not fail to take it so, and told him, the longer he was without me it might be the better for him, but the longer he was without religion I was sure would be the worse for him; and that I wondered how a man of his sense could talk so. He replied, he had rather talk of anything else, for

he found this discourse did not please me; I told him, he mistook me very much; for though I confessed it did not please me to find him to be what I hoped he was not, that is, a person who pretended to no religion, yet it pleased me very well that he had been so just to himself as to let me know it before any engagements had passed between us.

1*st Sist.* If I had not known that my sister was never courted before, I should have thought you had passed a great many such encounters as these.

3*rd Sist.* You know 'tis all new to me; but, however, I knew the thing was for my life, and that I must speak now or never, and I was resolved to put an end to it.

1*st Sist.* I must own you were in the right, though I am persuaded I could not have said half so much.

3*rd Sist.* Why you ha'n't heard half of it yet; I made him angry, serious, laugh, and, I think, verily, once I made him almost cry.

1*st Sist.* I am sorry I interrupted you; pray go on then: what said he next?

3*rd Sist.* He said he wondered I could say that no engagements were between us; he said he was so engaged to me as he could never go back. I answered, that as his engagements were from himself, so they were best known to himself; but that he knew very well I was under none to him. He smiled then, and said he hoped I was. I answered, I had not professed to be engaged; I told him, I would not deny that I had respect enough for him to have gone further, had not such difficulties appeared as I could never get over, and had he been the person he was represented; but that, as it was, I had too much respect for myself to ruin myself

with my eyes open, and too much respect for him to keep him in suspense.

1st Sist. Would he not take that for being in earnest?

3rd Sist. Yes, he showed me then that he took me to be in earnest, and showed me that he was in earnest too; for he appeared warm, and a little angry: he told me he was very sorry to be charged with deceiving me, and asked if ever he had said anything of himself which was not true; For, madam, says he, if I am not the person I appeared to be, I must have deceived you in something; pray what sort of a person did you take me for? I replied, as warm as he, that I wondered he should mistake me so much; that I thought he did not do me justice; that I had said, indeed, he was not the person he had been represented, but never said that he had represented himself one way or other. Then he begged my pardon again, and told me he had taken me wrong; that, whatever came of it, he would never deceive me; I should know the worst of him, whether I would have him or no. Indeed, sir, said I, I am persuaded you are no hypocrite. I understand you, said he, you think I have used more honesty than discretion. No, sir, said I, I very much approve your honesty, and do not blame your discretion at all. But I do, said he, for, I find, if I could have counterfeited more serious things than I am master of, and feigned myself a little religious, all had been well. I told him I would not say that it was not in his power to have deceived me, but I hoped he had acted a part much more like a gentleman. He replied that it was hard, then, I should make so unkind a return to him as to make him lose his mistress for his honesty.

1st Sist. Why really, sister, so it was.

3rd Sist. I told him I thought the best return

was to treat him with the same sincerity, and that was the reason of the freedom I took; that as he told me plainly what he was, I must tell him plainly, I could not think of engaging with him any further, till he had thought a little of those things which alone could make it reasonable for him to think of marrying. He would fain have turned it off to a jest; he laughed at me, he bantered me, he asked me how long I would stay for him? I told him I was in no haste. He asked me how long I thought I might stay before I got a saint to my mind, as the world went now? I told him I was but an ill judge of saints, and might be cheated, as wiser than I had been; but that, as I said before, I would not fall into the pit with my eyes open. He told me abruptly, he wished I had never seen him. At that word, I confess, I was a little alarmed; however I made no answer, but looked full in his face; I saw he was concerned, and, as I thought, in a kind of a passion. When he found I looked at him, he repeated the words thus, I wish with all my heart you had never seen me. I answered nothing. He added, he wished he had known my mind sooner. I still said nothing. Then he flung himself into my arms, and hung about me: My dear, says he, with an inexpressible tenderness, why are you silent? Because, says I, I would not give you an answer in kind to anything that is disobliging: he returned, it was impossible for him to say or do anything disobliging to me; that it was true, he wished I had never seen him, and that he had known my mind sooner; but it was, that he might have disguised himself better, and not have lost me for his being so foolishly honest. Why, said I, would you have endeavoured to have cheated me? Ay, certainly, said he, rather than lose you; and would have done it effectually too. Why, what would you have done?

said I. Done! replied he, I would have been the soberest, gravest, young fellow, that ever you saw in your life. And do you think yourself hypocrite enough, said I, to have concealed yourself effectually? Why not? said he: perhaps you think I am too much a fool for it. No, sir, said I, I think you are too honest for it; and, of the two, it is much the better on your side.

1st Sist. This was a kind of turn and return between jest and earnest: but how did it end?

3rd Sist. Why, he carried it on thus a long time, till he put an odd case to me, which made me put a short end to the discourse: we were speaking of fortunes, and the grandeur of families; at last we came to speak of the young duke of ———. Why now, says he, if his grace should come and court you with the state and grandeur of his quality, the title of a duchess, &c., you would not turn short upon him, as you did upon me, and say, My lord duke, pray what religion are you of? and yet he has no more religion than I. I told him, I thought he did not treat me fairly; that it was saying nothing at all, to say I would not have this man, or that man, who never made any pretensions to me; it was enough to me, that I would let him know, I would refuse all the men in the world, that should ever come to me, unless I found a reverence of God, a sense of religion, and a profession, at least, of the duty we all owe to our Maker, had made some impressions on them: that I might be deceived indeed with an hypocrite, for it was not in me to judge of the heart, and as the world was now stated, it was but too probable I should; but then it should be my misery, not my fault; and that since he seemed to insinuate that I did not act in that affair with sincerity, I had no better specimen of my resolution than this, that though I was very sorry to treat him

so, who, I was satisfied, had a respect for me, and whose respect I acknowledged was not disagreeable, and whose estate and proposals were very much better than I had reason to expect; yet that upon this one single account, I assured him I neither could nor would ever discourse more with him on this affair; and hoped he would not take it ill, that I was forced to be so plain with him before I could persuade him I was in earnest. And having said all this, I offered to rise and retire, but he held me fast in his arms, and would not let me stir.

1*st Sist.* Cruel wretch! how could you talk so to him? how did he look?

3*rd Sist.* Look! I confess, sister, his looks moved me more than all the words he could have said in half a year, and I shall never forget them; he seemed strangely affected, and once or twice I saw tears in his eyes; but he turned his head away, and recovered himself, and embarked me in another discourse, in spite of all I had said. Hold, says he, you have broke one positive promise you made me already. I told him I did not remember that I had ever made him any promise at all. Yes, says he, you told me just now, you would stay for me, till I had made a choice in matters of religion. I told him I had not broke that promise yet. Yes, he said, I had, in saying I would never discourse more with him on this affair. I replied then, that I would except that circumstance, though I thought he need not insist on it for several reasons; first, because he might find so many young ladies abroad, who would not trouble their heads to make the objection I had done, and that there was no occasion for him to turn religious for a wife; secondly, because there was no appearance of his returning upon those terms. He said that was more than I knew. But pray, madam, said he, why do you lay such a mighty

stress upon this particular? religion is an entire article by itself; my being religious or not religious need not obstruct our affection to one another; I am no enemy to religion. I answered, that it was indeed an acceptable thing, as times went now, not to find gentlemen despisers and haters of religion, and of all that favoured it; but that I was assured, where there was not a profession of religion, and where God was not acknowledged, there could be no blessing expected; and that I should think I had renounced God, and declared war against heaven, if I should marry a man that openly acknowledged he had no religion. He told me he was sorry to see me run things to such an extremity; that he did not think I had been in earnest, when he, in jest, said he had not thought of religion; that he would not urge me in a thing which I laid so much stress upon, but would wait on me again, and hoped to find me in another mind, and to let me know he was not quite so bad as I thought him to be. And thus we broke up.

1*st Sist.* What, did he go away angry?

3*rd Sist.* Truly, I cannot say how he was: he seemed disturbed and uneasy, and went away willinger than I expected.

1*st Sist.* Ay, ay, and willinger than you desired too; I can perceive it, sister, well enough.

3*rd Sist.* Why, I cannot deny but I have acted all this by a force upon my affection: but I should have been undone; I should never have had any peace, or expected any blessing in the match; for as a religious life is the only heaven upon earth, if it please God to support my resolution, I'll never sell the prospect of it for an estate, or for the most agreeable person alive.

1*st Sist.* 'Tis nobly resolved, sister! I hope you will be supported in so just a resolution: but do you think he will come no more?

3rd Sist. I hope not; but if he does, I resolve not to see him, if I can avoid it.

We must now leave the two sisters, awhile, and follow the young gentleman a little: for his story does not end so. He went away very much concerned, as above, and particularly it touched him very sensibly, that he should be taken for such a creature, that a sober, virtuous lady (for such he was sure his mistress was) should refuse him merely on account of his wicked character; and that though she acknowledged she had a respect for him, she was obliged to shun him, purely because she was afraid of him, as a hater of religion, and therefore dangerous to live with. It had run often in his mind, that she had said she could expect no blessing with him; and that if she married him she should think she had renounced God, and declared war against heaven; So that, to be sure, I am a dreadful fellow, says he, that she dares not take me lest she should appear to be a confederate with one of God's enemies.

It then occurred to him, that it really was no otherwise in fact; that she was in the right in it all; that he had, in truth, no religion, or sense of God, upon his mind, nor had ever entertained any notions of religion in his thoughts, and had told her so himself; and that therefore the young lady was in the right of it, and if she had any fund of religion herself, had a great deal of reason to refuse him; that every sober woman ought to refuse him upon the same account; and that she that did not, was not fit to make him a wife, or, at least, such a wife as he could expect any happiness from; that this young lady had made a true judgment, and it was his business not to think of persuading her to alter her mind, which, in short, must lessen his opinion of

her, but to consider what state and condition he was in, and what was his first business to do, to deliver himself out of it, before he went to her any more.

He grew uneasy upon this subject for some time, and being perfectly ignorant of everything called duty, having had an education wholly void of instruction, that uneasiness increased; and not knowing which way to cast his thoughts for immediate direction, he grew very melancholy and dejected: he loved this young woman to an extreme, and that affection was infinitely increased by her conduct in this affair, and by the extraordinary manner of her refusing him; but the reproaches of his heart, as being such a monster that a woman that even owned she loved him durst not join herself to him, doubled upon him as his affections for her increased.

He could not think of coming to her again, for he confessed the reasons which she gave for her not daring to take him were so just, and she had argued them so well, that if she should abate anything of them, he should not have so much esteem for her as he had before; and yet he saw, that if she did not, he could never expect to have her; and yet also he could not bear the thoughts of not having her, for all that.

He lived in this uneasy condition some months; his friends perceiving him to be very melancholy, tried many ways to divert him, but none reached his case, or if they did, they understood not how to advise him; for his relations were most like himself, people of levity and gallantry, being rich and gay; a family that dealt very little in matters of religion: he had an aunt, his mother's sister, who seemed very much concerned about it; but as she thought all that ailed him was his being crossed in his affec-

tion, she worked her thoughts about, night and day, to find out a wife for him, and so to take his thoughts off, and turn them another way: at length she found out a young lady in the city, of a very great fortune, (for she had near 20,000*l.* to her portion,) and she plied it so warmly with him, that he consented to treat of it with her friends, and his circumstances being such as few fortunes would refuse, he found his way clear enough, and so went to visit the young lady.

It was an odd kind of courtship, you may be sure, and he went about it accordingly; for, as he confessed afterwards, he resolved, before he saw her, not to like her, or anything she said or did; no, nor ever to be in earnest with her upon the thing; but only to jest with and banter her; and he told his aunt so beforehand. However, his aunt would not take him at his word, but would have him wait upon her, and so he did; but he needed not to have taken up any resolutions in the case, for he was spoiled for courtship already, at least for most of the ladies of the times; he had no relish in any of their conversation; it was like music for one that had no ear; all the gaiety and flutter about them was lost upon him; his first mistress had treated him with such solid reasoning, such serious talk, and had handled him after such a manner, that, in short, nothing but what was serious had now any relish with him; however, as I have said, he resolved to put a force upon himself so far as to go and see what kind of thing his new mistress was; and accordingly he did go, as above.

But when he had been one evening there, and had talked a little with her, he soon saw he had no need of making resolutions; that he was in no danger of being ensnared by her; the levity of her behaviour, the emptiness of her discourse, the weak-

ness of her conduct, made him sick of her the very first time; and when he came away, he said to himself, Is it possible for any man in his senses to bear this shuttlecock, that had but been one half hour with my other mistress! And away he came, not pleased at all. However, he went again for some time, till at last, not finding things mend, but rather grow worse, he was resolved he would talk a little with her about religion; and as he asked her one night, what religion she was of, she answered him just in the very words that he had bantered his other mistress with; O, says she, I am a mighty good Christian. I believe so, thought he, just such another as I was, when I was asked the same question. However, he concealed his thoughts, resolved to carry it on a little further, and gave her a mighty civil answer; I don't doubt that, madam, says he. Well, says she, then what would you have more? Nay, nothing, madam, returned he, I was only in jest. O, says she, you want to know what opinion I am of! You see I am no Quaker. No, says he, madam, I am not concerned about your opinion; you may easily have as much religion as I. Nay, says she, I ha'n't troubled my head much about it; I don't know what I may do when I keep a chaplain. He had enough of that discourse, and so he turned it off to something else; for though it was almost the pattern of what he had done with his first mistress, yet it looked with such a different face to him now, that, as he said afterwards, it made his very blood run cold within him, and filled him with horror at his own picture, which, he thought now, was set before his eyes in all its just deformities. When he came away from her, he said to himself, Well, now I see the true force of what that dear creature argued for herself against me, that to venture upon me, while I declared against religion, was

to run herself into the pit with her eyes open, and ruin herself by mere premeditated choice: it would be just so with me in this case, if I should marry this butterfly, we should even go hand in hand very lovingly to the Devil. This will not do my business! So he put an end to that affair as soon as he could, and resolved to see her no more.

All this while he had no assistance from either books, friends, ministers, or anybody, only the just and natural reflection of his own reason: but as he was a gentleman of polite manners, and bred to conversation with gentlemen of the best quality, as well as of the best parts, so the government of himself was the more easy, and he restrained the dejection of his spirits from making any extraordinary discovery of itself, only that he appeared a little more sedate and more thoughtful than before, and was a little more retired in his way of living, but not so much but that he came often into public company, as before.

It happened one time, that in promiscuous conversation at a chocolate-house near the court, this gentleman and seven or eight more being present, the company fell from talking of news to talking of religion: the discourse began about the differences which had happened in France lately, and were then depending between the pope and the French clergy; and of the *Sorbonne* or faculty of theology, as they are called there, being at that time employed in drawing up a new system of divinity, or body of doctrine, as they called it; and as a consequence, it was hinted how likely it was that such a strict inquiry made by men of learning and virtue into the fundamentals of religion, should lead them at last into protestant principles, and break that whole kingdom off from the errors and ignorance of popery, opening the eyes of the people to Christian

knowledge. There being some sober and sensible gentlemen there, the discourse was carried on very gravely and judiciously, and the whole company seemed to receive it with pleasure; when a couple of young beaus, who happened to be in the room, beginning to be tired with a thing so much out of their way, one of them rises up on a sudden, and says to the other, Come, Jack, I am tired of this dull, religious stuff; prythee let us go, there's nothing in it. Ay, says the other, with all my heart, I know nothing of the matter: come, will you go to the opera? There sat another young gentleman of their acquaintance there, and they pulled him to come with them: No, says he, I like this discourse very well, 'tis worth two operas to me. Why, says the other, how long have you been in orders, pray? Is such stuff as that fit conversation for gentlemen? Yes, says the sober young gentleman, I think it is; pray, what can there be in religious conversation that is unfit for a gentleman? There sat an ancient nobleman by, talking with a clergyman, who hearing the young gentleman's reply, fell a laughing; for this discourse put the former subject to a stop. On my word, gentlemen, says his lordship, Mr. ——— has met with you: I don't think you can answer his question. Yes, my lord, says the foolish beau, I think 'tis below a man of quality to trouble his head about it. Pray, sir, says the lord, is it below a man of quality to be a Christian? O, my lord, says the other beau, bantering and jesting, we are mighty good Christians at the opera; and turning away to his comrade, says he, Come, come, Jack, pr'ythee let's go; so they went both out together, for they did not care to engage. Our gentleman listened with pleasure to all this discourse, till he heard that word, mighty good Christians, and then reflected upon his having used that expression to his mis-

tress, and how his last lady gave him the same return; but he thought it was so empty, so absurd a turn, to a thing of that consequence, that he reproached himself with having talked so foolishly, and was ashamed to think how like one of these fops he had appeared to her, and how he had talked after the same senseless way, which he now looked upon to be the most empty, scandalous thing in the world.

When the two young rakes were gone, the lord, turning to the young gentleman that had refused them, complimented him upon his having given them so handsome an answer, and having run them both aground in one inquiry. My lord, said the gentleman, if my question run them aground, your lordship's question quite confounded them. Indeed, my lord, continued he, 'tis too much the notion now, especially among persons of quality, that 'tis below them to be religious. My lord said it was so indeed; but that he would fain ask such people, whether they thought St. Paul was a gentleman or no? And whether he did not show as much good breeding and good manners, when he appeared before Agrippa, Festus, and the governor Sergius Paulus, as any nobleman in Britain could have done at the bar of the house of lords? Upon this subject his lordship went on for half-an-hour, with a discourse so handsome, so to the purpose, and yet so serious, that it highly entertained the company; showing how it became every man of quality to behave himself in subjection to the rules given him by his Maker, as it became every subject to honour his governor; how piety and religion were the glory of a man of quality, and made nobility truly illustrious; that it was so far from being true, that religion was not suited to the life of a gentleman, that it was certain a man could not

truly be a gentleman without it; that religion was so far from being a dull phlegmatic thing, and useless in conversation, as was the fashionable notion of the town, that really no man could be so bright, so perfectly easy, so cheerful, so sociable, and so always in humour for society, as a Christian; that religion was the beauty of conversation, and assisted to make it pleasant and agreeable; that, without it, company was empty, discourse unprofitable, society unpleasant; and, in short, that conversation, without a mixture of something regarding religion, and a due connection with it, was like a dance without music, or a song without measure; like poetry without quantity, or speech without grammar. That it was a mistake to think Christianity received honour from the dignity of the persons who professed it; and his lordship said, he wondered to hear men express themselves so absurdly vain, as to say, such a man is an honour to religion; that the thing was true only in the reverse, and it should be said religion is an honour to such a person; that it was a contradiction in the very nature of the things, to say, such a man was noble, great, honourable, or a gentleman, without religion; and it might with every jot as much sense be said so of a person who had neither birth, family, or manners.

Our gentleman came home charmed with this discourse, as indeed the whole company were besides; especially considering the authority and dignity of the person who spoke it; his mind was inspired with new thoughts by it, both of religion and of himself: he not only saw more of the excellency of religion in itself, but began to see clearly it was the ornament of a gentleman to be a Christian. It was with the greatest contempt that he now looked back upon the notion he had formerly espoused of a gentleman's being above troubling

himself with serious things. How sordid and brutish did the two beaus appear, said he, compared to that noble and excellent person, my lord ——! How were they laughed at and despised by all the gentlemen in the company, and looked upon as fellows fit for nothing, but in the highway to disaster! On the other hand, it occurred to him, how handsomely did that young gentleman answer them; with what modesty did he speak, and yet boldly, in defence of a religious life; and what an honour was paid him for it, by all the company, and by the nobleman in particular! and then to think of what that lord had said, with what applause it was received; how all the company listened to his lordship, as to an oracle; how general a consent was given to it by all the gentlemen: and, in a word, how agreeable the conversation of the day was, put it altogether; and yet, said he, of eleven gentlemen in the room, there was not one man among them, except the clergyman, who was not above me both in quality and estate.

From all this he drew this general and happy conclusion for himself, viz., that he should never be a complete gentleman, till he became a religious man; and that the more of a Christian he was, the fitter he should be for the conversation of the best and greatest men in the kingdom; and in consequence of this resolution, he resolved to apply himself seriously to the study of religious things.

To avoid the usual diversions of the town, while these serious thoughts were upon him, he resolved to retire into the country, to a little seat he had in Hampshire, remote from all conversation, and where he had nobody to talk to but his own servants, or some of the neighbourhood, who were all his tenants. When he found himself so perfectly alone, it began to be a little too much for him, and he

grew very heavy, and a little hypochondriac; his mind was oppressed with the thoughts of his circumstances, but dark as to the due inquiries he ought to have made; at length he roused himself a little with these thoughts:

I talk of being religious! and being a Christian! Why, I understand nothing of it, or how to go about it. What is it? What is religion? And what is it to be a Christian? He puzzled himself with the questions, and knew not what answer to give himself, when it came thus into his mind; Did not the first dear preacher (meaning the young lady he had courted) tell me what religion was? and how she understood it, viz., a reverence of God, a sense of his worship, and impressions of duty to him that made us. This certainly is religion, and this is to be religious. But which way must I go about it?

He was seriously musing on this part one evening, walking all alone in a field near his house, when he began to look with great concern upon the want which he felt of an early foundation being laid in his mind by a religious education. Sure, said he to himself, we that are men of fortune are the most unhappy part of mankind; we are taught nothing. Our ancestors have had so little notion of religion themselves, that they never so much as thought of it for their children; I don't wonder they have thought it below them, for, knowing little or nothing of it themselves, they had no other excuse to one another for the leaving their children entirely destitute of it, but by pretending it was below their quality. This flung him into a reflection which raised this sudden passionate expression, God be merciful unto me! says he. What is become of my father and grandfather! He went on thus, Who am I! a gentleman! I am attended by

servants; sirred, and worshipped, and honoured here by a parcel of poor workmen and tenants, that think themselves nothing to me, and are half frighted if they do but see me; and I am in the sight of him that made me, and in my own too, a dog, a monster, a thousand times worse creature than the meanest of them; for I am a wretch with a soul, and yet know nothing of him that gave it me; a soul commanded to serve and obey the God that made it, and yet never taught to know him.

There lives a poor ploughman, and yonder lives a poor farmer; they both fare hard and work hard; how sober, how religious, how serious are they! how are they daily teaching and instructing their children! and how were they taught and instructed by their parents! and there's scarce a boy of ten years old in their families, but knows more of God and religion than I do; I have been taught nothing, and know nothing but this, that I am under the curse of darkness in the midst of light; ignorance in the midst of knowledge; and have more to give an account of, than a negro of Africa, or a savage of America.

He had wandered so long in these meditations, not minding his way, that he found night coming on, and he scarce knew he was so far from his own house till he looked about him; then he resolved to go back, so he broke off his thoughts awhile, and made little haste homeward. In his way, he necessarily went by a poor labouring man's door, who, with a wife and four children, lived in a small cottage on the waste, where he (the gentleman) was lord of the manor; as he passed by he thought he heard the man's voice, and stepping up close to the door, he perceived that the poor good old man was praying to God with his family; as he said afterwards, his heart sprung in his breast for joy at the occasion,

and he listened eagerly to hear what was said. The poor man was, it seems, giving God thanks for his condition, and that of his little family, which he did with great affection, repeating how comfortably they lived, how plentifully they were provided for, how God had distinguished them in his goodness, that they were alive, when others were snatched away by disasters; in health, when others languish with pain and sickness; had food, when others were in want; at liberty, when others were in prison; were clothed and covered, when others were naked and without habitation; concluding with admiring and adoring the wonders of God's providence and mercy to them, who had deserved nothing.

He was confounded, and struck as it were speechless, at the surprise of what he had heard; nothing could be more affecting to him. He came away (for he had stayed as long as his heart could hold) and walked to some distance, and there stopped, looked up, and round him, as he said, to see if he was awake, or if it was a dream. At last he got some vent to his thoughts, and throwing out his arms, Merciful God! says he, is this to be a Christian! What then have I been all my days! What's this man thus thankful for! Why, my dogs live better than he does in some respects, and is he on his knees adoring infinite goodness for his enjoyments! Why I have enjoyed all I have, and never had the least sense of God's goodness to me, or ever once said, God, I thank thee for it, in my life. Well might a sober woman be afraid of me. Is this humble temper, this thankfulness, for mere poverty! Is this the effect of being a Christian! Why, then Christians are the happiest people in the world! Why, I should hang myself if I was to be reduced to a degree of a hundred times above him; and yet here is peace, ease of mind, satisfaction in circum-

stances, nay, thankfulness, which is the excess of human felicity; and all this in a man that just lives one degree above starving. We think our farmers poor slaves, who labour and drudge in the earth to support us that are their landlords, and who look upon us like their lords and masters. Why this poor wretch is but a drudge to those drudges, a slave of slaves; and yet he gives God thanks for the happiness of his condition! Is this the frame of religious people! What a monster am I! Then he walked a little way further, but not being able to contain his astonishment, I'll go back, says he, to poor William, (for he knew his name,) he shall teach me to be a Christian; for I am sure I know nothing of it yet.

Away he goes back to the poor man's house, and, standing without, he whistled first, and then called William! William! The poor man, his family worship being over, was just going to supper, but hearing somebody whistle, he thought it might be some stranger that had lost his way, as is often the case in the country, and went to the door, where he saw a gentleman stand at some distance; but not seeing him perfectly, because it was dusk, he asked who it was, but was surprised when he heard his voice, and knew who it was.

Don't you know me, William? says his landlord.

William. Indeed I did not know your worship at first; I am sorry to see you out so late, and't please your worship, and all alone; I hope you an't on foot too?

Landlord. Yes I am, William: indeed I have wandered through the wood here a little too far, before I was aware: will you go home with me, William?

Will. Yes, and't please your worship to accept o' me, with all my heart; you shall not go alone in

the dark thus: and't please your worship to stay a bit, I'll go call Goodman Jones, and his son too; we'll all see you safe home.

La. No, no, I'll have none but you, William: come along.

Will. And't please you I'll take my bill in my hand, then, 'tis all the weapons I have.

La. Well, do then; but how will you do to leave your wife and children?

Will. God will keep them, I hope, and't please your worship; his protection is a good guard.

La. That's true, William; come along, then; I hope there are no thieves about. (*They go together.*)

Will. Alas! and't please your worship, 'tis a sorry thief would rob a cottage.

La. Well; but that little you have, William, it is something to you, and you would be loth to lose it.

Will. Indeed I could ill spare what I have, though it be very mean, because I could not buy more in the room of it.

La. I know you are poor, William: how many children have you?

Will. I have four, and't please you.

La. And how do you all live?

Will. Indeed, and't please you, we live all by my hard labour.

La. And what can you earn a day, William?

Will. Why, and't please you, I can't get above ten-pence a day now; but when your worship's good father was alive, he always gave the steward order to allow me twelve-pence a day, and that was a great help to me.

La. Well, but William, can your wife get nothing?

Will. Truly, now and then she can, in the summer; but it is very little: she's but weakly.

La. And have you always work, William?

Will. Truly, and't please you, sometimes I have not; and then it is very hard with us.

La. Well, but you do not want, I hope, William?

Will. No, blessed be God, and't please you, we do not want; no, no, God forbid I should say we want; we want nothing, but to be more thankful for what we have.

(*This struck him to the heart, that this poor wretch should say he wanted nothing, &c.*)

La. Thankful, William! why what hast thou to be thankful for?

Will. O dear! and't please you, I should be a dreadful wretch if I should not be thankful; what should become of me, if I had nothing but what I deserve?

La. Why, what couldst thou be worse than thou art, William?

Will. The Lord be praised, and't please your worship, I might be sick or lame, and could not work, and then we must all perish; or I might be without a cover; your worship might turn me out of this warm cottage, and my wife and children would be starved with cold: how many better Christians than I are exposed to misery and want, and I am provided for? Blessed be the Lord, I want for nothing, and't please you.

(*It was dark, and William could not see him; but he owned afterwards that it made his heart burn within him to hear the poor man talk thus; and the tears came out of his eyes so fast, that he walked thirty or forty steps before he could speak to him again.*)

La. Poor William! thou art more thankful for

thy cottage, than ever I was for the manor-house: prythee, William, can you tell me how to be thankful too?

Will. And't please your worship, I don't doubt but you are more thankful than I; you have a vast estate, and are lord of all the country I know not how far; to be sure you are more thankful than I, and't please you.

La. I ought to be so, you mean, William; I know that; for it all comes from the same hand.

Will. I don't doubt but you are very thankful to God, and't please you, to be sure you are; for he has given your worship great wealth; and where much is given, you know, and't please you, much is required; to be sure you are much more thankful than I.

La. Truly, William, I'd give a thousand pound I were as happy and as thankful as thou art: prythee, William, tell me how I shall bring myself to be thankful; for though thou art a poorer man, I believe thou art a richer Christian than I am.

Will. O! and't please your worship, I cannot teach you; I am a poor labouring man; I have no learning.

La. But what made you so thankful, William, for little more than bread and water?

Will. O sir! and't please you, my old father used to say to me, that to compare what we receive with what we deserve will make anybody thankful.

La. Indeed that's true, William: alas! we that are gentlemen are the unhappiest creatures in the world; we can't quote our fathers for anything that is fit to be named: was thy father as thankful as thou art, William?

Will. Yes, and't please you, sir, and a great deal more: O! I shall never be so good a Christian as my father was.

La. I shall never be so good a Christian as thou art, William.

Will. I hope you are, and't please you, much better already; God has blessed your worship with a vast great estate, and if he gives you grace to honour him with it, he has put means in your worship's hands to do a great deal of good with it, and't please you.

La. But you have a better estate than I, William.

Will. I an estate! and't please you, I am a poor labouring man; if I can get bread by my work for my poor children, it is all I have to hope for on this side eternity.

La. William! William! thou hast an inheritance beyond this world, and I want that hope; I am very serious with thee, William: thou hast taught me more this one night, of the true happiness of a Christian's life, that ever I knew before; I must have more talk with thee upon this subject; for thou hast been the best instructor I ever met with.

Will. Alas! sir, I am a sorry instructor, I want help myself, and't please you; and sometimes, the Lord knows, I am hardly able to bear up under my burden; but, blessed be God, at other times I am comforted, that my hope is not in this life.

La. I tell thee, William, thy estate is better than all mine; thy treasure is in heaven, and thy heart's there too; I would give all my estate to be in thy condition.

Will. O sir, I hope your worship is in a better condition than I every way.

La. Look you, William, I am very serious with thee; thou knowest how I have been brought up, for you remember my father very well.

Will. Yes, I do indeed; he was a good man to

the poor: I was the better for him many a day; he was a worthy gentleman.

La. But, William, he never took any care of us that were his children, to teach us anything of religion; and this is my case, as it is the case of too many gentlemen of estates; we are the unhappiest creatures in the world; we are taught nothing, and we know nothing of religion, or of him that made us; 'tis below us, it seems.

Will. 'Tis great pity, indeed, and't please you; but I know it is so too often; there's young sir Thomas ——, your worship's cousin, he is a pretty youth, and may make a fine gentleman; but though he is but a child, he has such words in his mouth, and will swear so already, it grieves me to hear him sometimes. It is true, his father is dead; but sure if my lady knew it, she would teach him better; it is pity so hopeful a young gentleman should be ruined.

La. And who do you think spoiled him?

Will. Some wicked children, that they let him play with, I believe, or some loose servants.

La, No, no, William, only his own father and mother; I have heard his father take him when he was a child, and make him speak lewd words, and sing immodest songs, when the poor child did not so much as know the meaning of what he said, or that the words were not fit for him to speak: and you talk of my lady! why, she will swear and curse as fast as her coachman: how should the child learn any better?

Will. O dear, that is a dreadful case indeed, and't please you! then the poor youth must be ruined of necessity; there's no remedy for him, unless it pleases God to single him out by his distinguishing invincible grace.

La. Why, his case, William, is my case, and the

case of half the gentlemen in England: what God may do, as you say, by his invincible grace, I know not; nor scarce know what you mean by that word; we are from our infancy given up to the Devil, almost as directly as if we were put out to nurse to him.

Will. Indeed, sir, and't please you, the gentlemen do not think much of religion; I fear it was always so; the Scripture says, *Not many rich, not many noble are called;* and it is *the poor of this world, that are rich in faith*, James ii. 5.

La. I find it so indeed, William, and I find myself at a dreadful loss in this very thing; I am convinced the happiness of man does not consist in the estate, pleasures, and enjoyments of life; if so, the poor alone would be miserable, and the rich man only be blessed; but there is something beyond this world, which makes up for all that is deficient here: this you have, and I have not; and so, William, you in your poor cottage are richer and more happy than I am with the whole manor.

Will. Indeed, sir, if in this world only we had hope, the poor would be of all men the most miserable; blessed be the Lord, that our portion is not in this life. But, sir, and't please you, I hope you will not discourage yourself neither; for God has not chosen the poor only; rich men have temptations from the world, and hindrances very many, and it is hard for them to enter into the kingdom of heaven, but they are not shut out; the gate is not barred upon them because they are rich.

La. I know not how it is, William, nor which way to begin; but I see so many obstructions in the work, that I doubt I shall never get over it.

Will. Do not say so, I beseech you, sir, and't please you; the promise is made to all; and if God has given you a heart to seek him, he will meet you

and bless you, for he has said, *Their hearts shall live that seek the Lord.* Many great and rich men have been good men: we read of good kings, and good princes; and if your difficulties are great, you have great encouragements; for you that are great men, have great opportunities to honour God, and do good to his church; poor men are denied these encouragements; we can only sit still, and be patient under the weight of our sorrows, and our poverty, and look for his blessing, which alone makes rich, and adds no sorrow to it.

La. But tell me, William, what is the first step such a poor uneducated thing as I am should take? I see a beauty in religion, which I cannot reach: I see the happiness which thou enjoyest, William, in an humble, religious, correct life; I would give all my estate to be in thy condition; I would labour at the hedge and the ditch, as thou dost, could I have the same peace within, and be as thankful, and have such an entire confidence in God as thou hast; I see the happiness of it, but nothing of the way how to obtain it.

Will. Alas! sir, and't please you, you do not know my condition; I am a poor disconsolate creature; I am sometimes so lost, so dark, so overwhelmed with my condition, and with my distresses, that I am tempted to fear God has forgotten to be gracious; that I am cast off, and left to sink under my own burden: I am so unworthy, so forgetful of my duty, so easily let go my hold, and cast off my confidence, that I fear often I shall despair.

La. And what do you do then, William?

Will. Alas! sir, I go mourning many a day, and waking many a night; but I bless the Lord, I always mourn after him; I always cleave to him; I am not tempted to run from him; I know I am undone, if I seek comfort in any other: *Alas! whither*

else shall I go? I cry night and day, *Return, return, O father!* and resolve to lie at his foot; and that, *if he slay me, yet I will trust in him:* and blessed be the God of my hope, he does send comfort and peace, though sometimes it is very long.

La. Well, William, and this is a disconsolate condition? Would you change your condition with me that am the rich glutton?

Will. O do not say so of yourself, and't please you; God has touched your worship's heart, I perceive, with an earnest desire after him; you have a gracious promise, that would greatly encourage you, if you would but take it to yourself.

La. Encourage me, William! that's impossible: what can encourage me? What promise is it you talk of, that looks towards me?

Will. Why, and't please you, I heard you say you would change your condition with such a poor wretch as I; you would labour at the hedge and the ditch, to have the knowledge of God and religion, and to be able to be thankful to him, and have a confidence in him: this implies that you have a longing earnest desire after him, and after the knowledge of his truth.

La. Indeed, that is true, William.

Will. Then there are many comforting Scriptures, which speak directly to you, sir, viz., *Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled: The longing soul shall be satisfied: He will satisfy the desires of all those that fear him;* and the like.

La. But what must I do? Which is the way an ignorant wretch must take?

Will. Sir, and't please you, the way is plain: we must pray to him; prayer is the first duty, and prayer is the greatest privilege we can enjoy in the world.

La. Ay, William; but there is a great deal required in prayer, that I am an utter stranger to: I never prayed in my life; no, nor, I believe, my father or grandfather before me, William: I came of a cursed race, William, and, I doubt, 'tis entailed upon the family, like the estate.

Will. O, sir, do not say that: the Scripture is plain, and't please you, that the children shall not be punished for the father's transgression.

La. But then, certainly, they must not tread in their father's steps, as I do exactly, William.

Will. That's true, indeed, sir, they must not tread in those steps.

La. But what dost talk, then, of prayer being the first duty? why, if that be the first thing, I must not begin; for how can such a creature as I pray to God?

Will. As the Spirit of God will assist those whose hearts are towards him, so we must pray that we may be taught to pray.

La. Is it not a difficult thing for a man to pray to God, William, that scarce ever thought of God in all his life?

Will. Well, sir; but who do you think put those thoughts into your mind which you now have? and who opened your eyes, sir, to see a beauty in religion, as now you see? and touched your heart with such an earnest desire after the ways and things of God, as you now expressly say you have? do you think this is not of God, and't please you?

La. Indeed, William, I know not; it would be a very delightful thing to me if I thought it was so.

Will. Without question, sir, it is: man can have no such power; nature prompts us to evil thoughts, and evil desires, and to them only; the *imagination of the thoughts of our hearts are evil, and only evil;* if there are any good motions or heavenly

desires in the heart, they are from God: *every good gift, and every perfect gift, comes down from above;* 'tis his power works them, his invisible grace forms all holy desires in the soul.

La. Well; and what do you infer from thence, William?

Will. Why, sir, and't please you, if God has begun a good work, he will perfect it; if he has turned your face towards him, he will lift up your heart to him: to pray to God is as natural to a convert, as to cry after the father or mother is to an infant.

La. Thou speakest, William, with more clearness than ever I heard before; but 'tis a strange thing to me to talk of praying to God! I pray! that except just the common road of going to church, cannot say that ever I kneeled down to pray to God once in all my life: how shall I pray?

Will. That's sad, indeed, and't please you; I am sorry to hear your worship say so: does any creature live, and not pray to God! O dear! that's a sad, dreadful thing, in truth! But, however, sir, do not let that hinder you now.

La. How dost mean hinder me? what can be said to hinder me doing what I have no knowledge in, no notion of, no inclination to?

Will. O, sir, and't please you, you mistake your own condition very much: do not discourage yourself thus; you know how to pray better than many that make much noise with their devotion, I see it plainly.

La. I pray! William; I pray! I tell thee, I never prayed in my life, as I know of.

Will. And't please your worship not to be angry with me for my plain way——

La. Prythee, William. be plain, and speak freely; don't worship me and sir me now; talk to me as if

I were your neighbour or comrade; these are not things to talk of with cringes and bows: I am a wretched, contemptible, poor, rich man; thou art a poor, rich, happy Christian. Talk plainly to me, William, the coarser the better, I like it best; there will be no difference, William, between thee and I hereafter, but what will be on thy side: tell me, therefore, what you mean, William, by my praying!

Will. Why, sir, you allow me to be plain then; I say, you mistake your own condition, and thereby put off the comfort you might receive; I say, you do pray, and know better how to pray, than many that come to church and appear as if they prayed every day.

La. You must explain yourself, William, I do not understand you.

Will. Why, sir, those earnest desires you have after the knowledge of God, and after the true worship of God, which is the sum of religion, I say, those earnest desires are really prayers in their own nature; sincere wishes of the heart for grace, are prayers to God for grace; prayer itself is nothing but those wishes and desires put into words, and the first is the essential part; for there may be words used without the desire, and that is no prayer, but a mockery of God; but the desires of the heart may be prayers, even without the words.

La. You surprise me a little, William.

Will. Besides, sir, and't please you, those earnest desires you have after religion, and after the knowledge of God, will force you to pray, first or last, in a verbal prayer; they will break out like a flame that cannot be withheld; your heart will pray when you know not of it: praying to God, sir, is the first thing a sense of religion dictates, as a child crieth as soon as it is born.

La. Alas! William, I know nothing of it; I am such an unaccountable wretch, God knows, I know nothing what belongs to praying, not I; thou hast let me see further into it, by that thou saidst just now, than ever I saw or heard before.

Will. Why, look ye now, and't please you, I told you it would break out when you knew not of it, and you would pray to God before you were aware: did you not pray just now?

La. Pray! why, what did I say? I said I know nothing of prayer.

Will. Nay, that was not all: what is the meaning of those words, Alas, William! and whence came that sigh when you called yourself that hard name? and what was the sense of your soul but this, God be merciful to me, and teach me to pray; for, alas! I know nothing what belongs to praying: was not all this praying?

La. Indeed, William, my heart had such a kind of meaning; but I cannot form the thought into words, no, not into my very soul.

Will. It is all one, sir: God, that moves the soul, certainly hears his own motion; how should he but hear it? is it not his own working! *The preparation of the heart, and the answer of the tongue, is of the Lord:* he will hear every sincere desire which he forms in your soul, whether it be conceived into words or no; for it is the voice of his own spirit and grace.

La. Thou art a comforting preacher, William; I don't wonder you enjoy snch a shining beam of light in your own soul, when you have such a sense of things as this: you shall be my instructor, William; I may call you father rather; for thou art better to me than ten fathers.

Will. O, sir, and't please you, my discomforts are very great, and the beam you speak of is very dim

in me; do not speak of such things of me, it makes me very sad, for I know my own darkness: I am a poor despised creature.

La. Well, but God may make you an instrument of good to me, or to any one he pleases: I never had thus much instruction in my life, William; you will not be backward to do good, I hope, if it be thus cast in your way.

Will. I shall be very glad, if such a worm as I am should be an instrument in God's hand to comfort or inform your worship, and shall praise God for the occasion as long as I live; and indeed I rejoice, and't please you, to see your worship inquiring after these things; I pray God increase the knowledge of himself in your mind, and comfort you with the hope of his presence and blessing.

La. Amen: I thank you, William.

Will. Look you now, sir, and't please you, did you not pray then again?

La. I joined with you, William; I don't know; but if that be praying, I think I did pray.

Will. Thus God will move your heart to pray to him: and I beseech your worship to read the Scriptures; read them much, read them seriously, and pray, sir, observe this one thing, when you read, which I have experienced often, and very comfortably; and I dare say, you and everyone that reads the word of God, with desire of a blessing, will experience the like, viz., when you are reading, and come to any place that touches you, and that your mind is affected with, you shall find, even whether you will or no, your heart will every now and then lift itself up thus, Lord! make good this word to me! Lord! draw my heart thus to thee! Lord! help me thus to seek thee, and the like; and be not afraid to call that praying; for mental petition is prayer as well as words; and is,

perhaps, the best moved prayer, and the best expressed in the world.

La. You will persuade me, William, that I both have prayed already, and shall again, whether I will or no, and whether I know anything of it or no, and that I want no teaching.

Will. Pray, sir, does a child want to be taught to cry?

La. Will that simile hold, William?

Will. Indeed it will, sir: read the Scripture; if God's word reaches your heart, you will not need to be taught to pray.

La. I told you William, you hardly knew who you were talking to: you talk of my reading the Scripture; why, I'll tell thee, William, I ha'n't a Bible in the world, and never had one in my life: there's the manor-house yonder; I question whether God was ever prayed to in it, or his name ever mentioned there, except profanely, or perhaps to swear by it, since 'twas built: why you know as well as I, what a family it was that lived in it when my father purchased it; they were as much strangers to religion, William, as thou art to Greek and Hebrew; and ours were but little better, that came after them.

Will. I fear indeed, and't please your worship, it was so: poor gentlemen! they lived badly indeed, very badly. Alas! gentlemen must not be told of it by us poor men; but they were a sad wicked family, I remember it well.

La. But, William, thou canst lend me a Bible, can'st thou not? and I'll read it all over while I stay in the country.

Will. Yes, and't please your worship, I'll lend you a Bible: I'll bring it in the morning.

La. Do, William, and come and stay with me tomorrow; I'll make thee amends for thy day's work,

and there's something for thy good advice, and coming so far with me.

(*He gives him some money, and sends him back again.*)

Will. Thank your worship.

They were now come to the manor-house, and he was loath to detain him, because it was late, and because he was so affected with the discourse they had had that he wanted very much to be alone.

As soon as he came into his own house, he locked himself into a parlour, and began to consider with great seriousness all these things, and especially what the poor man had said to him about praying to God; and as his thoughts were intent upon the meaning of prayer, the nature of it, and the advantages of it, at every turn of these thoughts he found a secret kind of hint like a voice in him, not voice to him, O that I could pray! O, if I could but pray as the poor man does! How happy should I be, if I could but pray to God! and the like. He was not aware of these movements; they seemed to be wrought in his affections perfectly involuntary and sudden; and they passed over without being noticed and observed, even by himself, till after a good while they returned stronger and more frequent upon him; so that he not only perceived it, but remembered how often his heart had thrown out those expressions: when on a sudden the poor man's words came into his mind with such a force, as if the man himself had been there, Why this was praying; certainly I have been praying all this while, and knew it not.

Upon this reflection, it was impossible for him to express, as he said afterwards, what a strange rapture of joy possessed his mind, and how his heart

was turned within him; then he fell into the same sacred ejaculations of another kind, viz., of admiration, praises, thanksgiving, and mere astonishment; but still without speaking otherwise than a kind of mental voice, sounding or injecting words into his mind, such as these, Lord! shall I be brought to pray to God! I that have never been told so much as how to mention his name! I that have never known anything of God, or myself! or have been taught anything of my duty to him! shall I be taught to pray! and taught by who! by this poor despicable creature, that, at another time, I would not have spoke to if he had made me twenty bows and scrapes! His tongue then was let loose; and he cried out, Blessed be God that ever I came near that poor man.

He continued all that evening filled with comforting reflections, and with a kind of inward peace and satisfaction; which as he had never known before, so he knew not how to describe or relate it, or indeed how to manage it; in the morning he found the same meditation and the same lightness upon his spirits returned, and he remembered what the poor man had prayed for, for him, viz., that he might be comforted with the hopes of the presence and blessing of God, to which his heart had so readily said, Amen: and now he longed for the poor man's coming with the Bible.

The poor man was likewise mightily affected with his case, considering him a young gentleman of such a family and fortune; and who was so far above him, as that, though he was his landlord, he durst never offer to speak to him in his life, but with the greatest submission and distance; how he should come to call him out, and to talk to him, of such things especially, and in so serious a manner.

He then reflected with a serious joy, that this young gentleman should be thus touched with a solid sense of religion and good things, for it was easy to see that it was not a slight or an insincere work upon his mind; it rejoiced his heart, that the heir of the estate should be thus likely to prove a good man; and it presently occurred to his thoughts how great a blessing such a gentleman might be to the country, to the poor, and to the uninstructed people round him; as well by reforming their manners, and restraining their vices, as perhaps by bringing religion to be accepted and received among them by his example.

These were some of the thoughts he came along with, and he prayed to God, as he walked, very earnestly, that he might be made an instrument to bring the soul of this gentleman to the knowledge of God, and to bow at the footstool of his Redeemer as a true penitent.

His prayers were not in vain: prayer put up from such a principle, and with such a spirit, seldom is made in vain.

He came to the gentleman while he was in bed; for he had given orders to his servants to bring him up to his chamber; there he delivered him the Bible, and told him he hoped he would find in it both encouragement and direction in the great work which he was going about, and that God would bless him, and would supply by his grace all the wants of early instruction, which he had so much complained of.

He received the poor man with a glad heart, made him sit down by him, and told him God had made him the instrument of so much good to him, that he could not part with him any more while he stayed in the country.

William, says he, God has made you a father to

me, and I'll be a father to you and your family; you shall go no more home to that poor cottage, you shall have something else to be thankful to God for than bread and water.

Will. And't please your worship, I have much more to be thankful for than that already; but if God has been pleased to assist me to do you good in this great business of bringing such a soul as yours to the knowledge of himself, I shall have cause to praise him beyond all that ever I had before.

La. Well, William, I have sent for your wife and children; they shall be my care now, not yours; I'll provide a house for you.

(*He gave him a house and a little farm rent free to live on, and made him his bailiff, and receiver of the rents of the manor.*)

Will. Your worship will be a father to me and my family, indeed, then; I can never deserve so much at your hands; and't please you, I am very willing to work still for my bread, I thank your worship.

La. No, William, you shall never work any more for your bread; you have been thankful for a little, William; I heard you last night, when you were at prayer in your family, and giving thanks to God for the plenty you enjoyed. Poor William! you do not know how it affected me, that never gave God thanks in my life; now you shall be thankful for better things.

Will. I shall be greatly bound to be thankful to your worship too, and't please you.

La. No, William, do not thank me, thank God still.

Will. An' your worship mend my condition, I fear my thankfulness to God should abate. When I lived so near misery and distress, it made me

more sensible of God's goodness, in keeping me out of it, than I may, I doubt, when I am full.

La. I do not think you will ever be unthankful, William, that could be so full of a sense of God's mercy, even in the extremest poverty. But come, William, I shall leave that; I have ordered my steward both to provide for and employ you, and I shall say no more of that now; but my business now is of another nature. And first, I must tell you how I have been employed since I left you last night.

(*Here he gave the poor man an account of himself, and of his reflections upon what he had said to him, and how insensibly he had received secret comfort, as above; and he found tears run down the poor man's cheeks, all the while he was talking to him for joy.*)

Will. O sir! give God the praise, this is all his own work; and I hope your comfort shall increase and continue. Did I not tell you, sir, God would teach you to pray!

La. But now, William, what shall I do with this book?

Will. Read it, sir, and't please you, and you will pray over it, whether you will or no.

La. But I am still ignorant; I have no minister near me to explain it to me.

Will. The Spirit of God will expound his own word to you.

La. Well, William, you shall be my minister. Come, sit down by me and read in it.

Will. Alas! I am a sorry creature to be a teacher, sir; but, and't please you, I have turn'd down some places, which I thought of, to show your worship for your first reading.

La. That's what I wanted, William.

Will. And't please you, here's a text which tells

you what is the whole design of a written gospel; for what end the life of our blessed Redeemer was laid down, and his works and doctrine were published to the world; and this seems to be the first thing we should know of the Scriptures, for, indeed, it is the sum and substance of them.

La. Let me see it, William.

Will. Here it is, sir. *These things are written, that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing ye might have life through his name,* John xx. 31.

La. That is very comprehensive indeed, William!

Will. And here is another passage I folded down, lest you should ask how you should do to believe; it is in Mark ix. 24; it is the story of a man who brings his child to our Lord to be healed, when possessed of an evil spirit. Our Lord asks him, if he could believe: *If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth:* and v. 24, the father cried out with tears, *Lord, I believe, help thou my unbelief.*

La. What do you look at me for, William.

(*William looks full in his face while he repeated the words.*)

Will. O sir! I saw your very heart; I know you prayed; I know you said Amen in your very soul to that word. Glory be to the grace of God, and to the word of God for you; the Scripture, read with such a heart as yours now is, will soon teach you all that you want to know, and all that you want to do.

The poor gentleman was overcome with his words, and could not speak for a good while; tears came out of his eyes, and at last he burst out thus: Lord! what a creature have I been, that have lived without the teachings of the Scriptures all my days!

Thus far this happy poor man was made an instrument to the restoring this gentleman, and bringing him to the knowledge of God, and to a sense of religion; and, in a word, to be a most sincere Christian. We shall hear further of him after the next dialogue.

The end of the second dialogue.

DIALOGUE III.

We must now go back to the family which we began with. The father of the young ladies was gone into the country to visit his sister, who was newly become a widow; little thinking, whatever his eldest daughter had said to him, that his youngest daughter would make such short work with her lover in his absence, and that she would quite put an end to his courtship all at one blow, as she had done, before he came home again.

He spent some little time at his sister's, to comfort her, and assist her in her affairs after the loss of her husband; and, particularly, because her eldest son being of age, and just upon marrying, she intended to remove; the house which was the seat of the family being to be fitted up for her new daughter-in-law. Upon these circumstances he began the following discourse with his sister.

Bro. Well, pray sister, what kind of a lady has my nephew got? Is he well married?

Sist. Truly, brother, I can hardly tell how to answer you that question; I believe everybody will be better pleased than I.

Bro. Why, sister, what is the cause, pray, that you are so difficult?

Sist. O brother! the main difficulty that has made me all my days the most miserable of all women.

Bro. What! religion, I warrant you; you would have him married a nun!

Sist. Nay, I don't know why I should desire a religious woman to come into the family.

Bro. I never saw the like of you, sister, you are always a complaining; you have had one of the best-humoured, goodest-conditioned, merriest fellows in the world for this five-and-twenty years, and yet you call yourself a miserable woman. What could you ask in a husband, that you had not in sir James?

Sist. Dear brother, is this a time for me to tell you what I wanted in sir James, when he is in his grave? I have wanted nothing in him, that a woman could desire in a husband; he was rich in his estate, a lovely, complete, handsome gentleman in his person, and held it to the last; he was the best-humoured man that ever woman had, and kind, as a husband, to the last degree: I never saw him in a passion in my life; he was a man of good sense and good learning; a man of honour, good breeding, and good manners; none went beyond him; all the country knows it, and loved him for it.

Bro. Very well; and yet my sister a miserable woman! would not any man laugh at you? I think, sister, if ever you were a miserable woman, it is now; because you have lost him.

Sist. Well, that's true too; I am so now, many ways, and some perhaps that you do not think of, brother.

Bro. I know what you mean again; I warrant you ha' been whining over him, to think what is become of him now: prythee what's that to you or I? what can you by your concern for him do in that

case, one way or other; can't you leave him to God's mercy now he's gone?

Sist. Dear brother, it is in vain to answer you; I must leave him to God's mercy, and so we must leave ourselves: but do you think 'tis not an afflicting, dreadful thing to me, that know how he lived, and how he died, to reflect upon his condition, if I had any love for him?

Bro. Why, how did he live? he lived like a gentleman, as he was.

Sist. That's true; and that, as times go, brother, is to live like a heathen; you know well enough, what a life I have had with him on that only account; you know, he was so far from having any sense of religion, or of his Maker, on his mind, that he made a jest and a mock of it all his days, even to the last.

Bro. I know he did not trouble himself much about it.

Sist. Nay, he not only did not himself, but he did not really love to have anybody about him religious; I have known many gentlemen that have had no religion themselves, yet value it in others, and value and reverence good men; but he thought all people hypocrites that talked of anything religious; and could not abide to see any appearance of it in the house; it was the only thing we had any difference about all our days.

Bro. And I think you were a great fool to have any difference with him about that: could not you ha' kept your religion to yourself, and have let him alone to be as merry and as frolicsome as he would without it.

Sist. Nay, I was obliged to do that, you may be sure; you know it well enough.

Bro. Yes, yes, I know he served you many a merry prank about your religious doings, such as putting

every now and then a ballad in your Prayer-book or Psalm-book; and I think he put the story of Tom Thumb once in one of Dr. Tillotson's sermons.

Sist. No; 'twas two leaves out of Don Quixote. He did a great many such things as those to me.

Bro. But they were all frolics, there was nothing of passion or ill-nature in them: did not he write something in the children's spelling-book once, and make them get it without book, instead of the lesson you had set them?

Sist. Yes, yes, he played me a thousand tricks that way.

Bro. I think once he pasted a receipt to make a tanzy or a cake, just next to one of the questions of the catechisms, where your daughter's lesson was.

Sist. Ay, ay; and every now and then he would paste a single printed word, that he cut out of some other book, just over another word in the books, so cunningly, that they could not perceive it, and make them read nonsense.

Bro. Why what harm was there in all that?

Sist. Why, it showed his general contempt of good things, and making a mock of them; otherwise the thing was not of so much value.

Bro. Well, and wherein was you miserable, pray, in all this? I don't understand you in that at all.

Sist. Why in this, that he was not at all a religious man.

Bro. But what was that to you, still?

Sist. Why, first, brother, there was all family religion lost at one blow; there could not be so much as the appearance of worshipping or acknowledging the God that made us; nay, we scarce asked him leave to eat our meat, but in seeret, as if we were ashamed of it: sir James never so much as said grace or gave thanks at table in his life, that I remember.

Bro. And they that do, make it nothing but a ceremony, and do it for fashion sake; not that they think it signifies anything.

Sist. Well, let them do it for fashion sake then if they will, but let them do it; 'tis the most rational thing in the world, while we own that God gives us our meat, that we should ask him leave to eat it, and thank him for it when we have done: but alas! this is but a small part of the ill consequences of an irreligious family.

Bro. Well, what more is there? for this is nothing but what is in thousands of families, who pretend to religion on all sides.

Sist. Why, all relative religion was lost too.

Bro. Relative religion, sister! what do you mean by that?

Sist. Why, first, I mean by it, that religion which ought to be between a man and his wife; such as comforting, encouraging, and directing one another, helping one another on in the way to heaven, assisting one another in Christian duties, praying with and for one another, and much more which I could name; and which, without doubt, passes to their mutual comfort and delight between a man and his wife, where they are mutually agreed in worshipping and serving God, and walking on in the happy course of a religious life: all this has been lost, and it has been a sad loss to me, brother; we have all need of helps, and it is not every one that considers, or indeed that knows, what help, what comfort, what support, a religious husband and wife are or may be to one another; this, I say, has been a sad loss to me, I assure you.

Bro. These are nice things; but, methinks, if you could not have these helps from your husband, you might find them in other things, such as books,

ministers, &c.; it need not be called such a loss neither.

Sist. 'Tis such a loss, brother, that if I were to live my days over again, I would not marry a man that made no profession of religion; no! though he had ten thousand pounds a year, and I had but a hundred pounds to my portion; nay, I think I would work for my bread, rather.

Bro. You lay a mighty stress upon these things.

Sist. Everybody, brother, that has any sense of the blessing of a religious family, must do so. Pray if the honouring and serving God be our wisdom, our duty, our felicity in this world, and our way to the next, what comfort, what happiness can there be, where these are wanting in the head of the family?

Bro. It is better, to be sure, where they may be had; but to lay all the happiness of life upon it, as if a man or a woman could not be religious by themselves, without they were so both together, I do not see that; I think you carry it too far.

Sist. I'll convince you that I do not carry it too far at all; I do not say a man or a woman may not be religious by themselves, though the husband or wife be not so; but I say, all the help and comfort of relative religion is lost; the benefit and value of which none knows, but they that enjoy it, or feel the want of it; but there is another loss, which I have not named, and which my heart bleeds in the sense of every day.

Bro. What's that, I wonder?

Sist. Why, children, brother! children! You see I have five children: what dreadful work has this want of family religion made among my poor children!

Bro. Why, sir James did not hinder you instructing your children!

Sist. Did he not? 'tis true he did not, when they were little; but has he not by example and want of restraint encouraged all manner of levity, vanity, folly, nay, and even vice itself in them? Do you think children, thus let loose to humour their young inclinations, and to the full swing of their pleasures, would not soon snatch themselves out of the arms of their mother, and deliver themselves from the importunities of one that had no other authority with them than that of affection?

Bro. Why, truly, there is something in that; but I do not see that your children are much the worse; there's your eldest son, sir James that is now; he is a pretty young gentleman; I hear a very good character of him.

Sist. Why, truly, brother, as times go now with gentlemen, we may be thankful neither he nor his brother are debauched or vicious; and I am thankful for it; they have good characters for modest pretty gentlemen, as you say: but still, brother, the main thing is wanting; I cannot be partial to them, though they are my own; there is not the least sense or notion of religion in them; they cannot say they have no knowledge of it; I took care to deprive them of that excuse, as early as they knew anything: but it goes no further; my eldest son will tell me sometimes, he has as much religion as a gentleman of a thousand a year should have; and his brother tells me, if I would have had him have any religion, I should have kept our parish living for him, and bred him a parson.

Bro. They are very merry with you then, I find, upon that subject.

Sist. It is a dreadful jest to me, brother; I am far from taking it merrily; you know, I was otherwise brought up; our father and mother were another sort of people, they united their very souls in

the work of God; they joined in every good thing with the utmost affection; they loved the souls as well as the bodies of us their children; the family was a house of cheerful devotion: God was served night and day; and, in a word, as they lived, so they died; they dropped comfortably off, and went, as it were, hand in hand to heaven.

Bro. And yet, sister, you see, we that were their children were not all alike; there's our brother Jack, and our sisters, Betty and Sarah, what can be said about them? Pray what religion are they of?

Sist. I'll tell you what can be said, and what will stick close to them one time or other, viz., if they are lost, it is not for want of good instruction, or good example; they cannot blame father or mother; it has been all their own: parents may beg grace for their children, but they cannot give it them; they may teach their children good things, but they cannot make them learn; that is the work of God, and parents must submit it to him: but when parents do nothing; nay, rather by example and encouragement, lead their children into wickedness; what a dreadful thing is that!

Bro. Well, but our two sisters were not led into wickedness: and yet, as I said, they value religion as little as anybody.

Sist. Ay, brother, I can tell you how my sisters were both ruined; for they were not so educated.

Bro. What do you mean by ruined? they are not ruined, I hope.

Sist. I mean as to their principles, brother, which I think is the worst sort of ruin; they were ruined by marrying profligate, irreligious husbands.

Bro. I don't know what you mean by profligate; I think they are both very well married.

Sist. Yes, as you call married, and that I call being undone.

Bro. And pray what has ruined Jack? for he's as graceless a wretch almost as your sir James was.

Sist. Truly brother, just the other extreme: he has a wild, giddy, playhouse-bred wife; full of wit, and void of grace; that never had any religion, nor knew what the meaning of it was; this has ruined him. My brother was a sober, well-taught, well-inclined young man, as could be desired; but getting such a tempter at his elbow, instead of a wife to help him on to heaven, she has led him hood-winked to the gates of hell, and goes cheerfully along with him; a sad instance, brother, of the want of family religion.

Bro. Well, but what's all this to what we were upon, of parents leading their children into wickedness? he was not led so by his parents.

Sist. But you see his children are.

Bro. I cannot say that; few parents, though they are bad themselves, will prompt their children to be so too: that's what I have seldom seen.

Sist. Well, that has been the case of my family; and that it is that has broke my heart, and gives me cause to say I have been the most miserable woman alive.

Bro. But you have this comfort still, that you have not been the occasion of it.

Sist. That's true; but even that does not lessen the grief of seeing my children lost and ruined before my face, and their own father be the instrument to it.

Bro. They cannot be said to be ruined; they are very fine gentlemen, I assure you.

Sist. They are ruined, as to the best qualification of a gentleman.

Bro. I warrant you they do not think so, sister: religion makes us good Christians, that is confessed; but I do not see it makes a gentleman. What is

more frequent than to see religion make men cynical and sour in their tempers, morose and surly in their conversation? They think themselves above the practice of good manners, or good humour.

Sist. This is all by the mistake of the thing; 'tis want of religion that makes men thus. It is in good breeding as it is in philosophy; a little philosophy, a little learning, makes a man an atheist; a great deal brings him back, and makes him a Christian: so a little religion makes a man a churl, but a great deal teaches him to know himself, and be a gentleman. When good principles join with good manners, how should they but illustrate the education, and set off the breeding of a man of quality? As it is a mistake to say that jewels should be worn by none but homely women, it is just the contrary; so religion adorns education, as jewels give real beauty a double lustre.

Bro. Your notions are delicate! you are very nice, it seems, in these things, sister; though I must confess I am of your mind, when I consider it well.

Sist. Let the Scripture be judge whether the rules of life dictated by the apostles to the Christian churches were not such as not only agree well with that of a gentleman, but indeed with that without which no man can be a gentleman: if you look almost through all the epistles in the New Testament, you will find it so: I'll name you a few.

Phil. i. 9, 10. *That your love may abound in knowledge and all judgment.*—There's wisdom and learning. *That ye may approve things that are excellent.*—There's solid judgment. *That you may be sincere, and without offence.*—There's the honesty and open-heartedness of a true gentleman.

1 Pet. *Love as brethren, be pitiful, be courteous.*

—There's the charity, the beneficence, and the good breeding of a gentleman.

Col. iii. 12. *Put on bowels of mercy, kindness, humbleness of mind, meekness, &c.*—Who can be a gentleman without these?

Phil. ~~Col.~~ iv. 8. *Whatsoever things are honest, just, pure, lovely, and of good report, think of these things.*—What think you now? Can the practice of these things dishonour a gentleman? or do they honour and illustrate, and indeed make a gentleman?

Phil. ii. 3. *In lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than themselves.*—What becomes a gentleman more than such humility?

I could name you many other: will any man that reads these rules say they are not suitable to a gentleman? No, brother, it shall ever be a rule to me, that the only complete man upon earth is a religious gentleman.

Bro. Why, you are wrapped up in these notions, sister; I fancy you have been documenting my daughter; I am afraid on't, I assure you; she has got just the same things in her noddle, and she has carried her scruples to such a length, that she had like to have refused the best match that ever will be offered to her as long as she lives; but I believe I rattled her out of it when I came away.

Sist. I am, perhaps, the fuller of it, because it has been the ruin of my family, and of my children; and, I think, if ever poor woman was unhappy with a gentleman that had not one bad quality in him, it was I; sir James, as I told you, was such a man for everything else, as there are few such in the world; but he hated religion, and that has ruined us all.

Bro. You would make any one laugh to hear you talk of being ruined; why, are you not left happy,

easy, and pleasant? is not your eldest son a baronet, and has 1400*l.* a year? is not your second son very well provided for? have not your daughters 5000*l.* apiece fortune left them? and are not you left so rich, you know not what to do with it all?

Sist. I do not speak of ruin as you understand it, brother; I think a family without religion is a family ruined, and that in the worst sense that ruin can be understood in; if I were to marry again, I would not marry the best duke in the nation, that would not endeavour to carry me to heaven, and to go there himself: the command of the Scripture is plain in it, *Be not unequally yoked*, 2 Cor. vi. 14; how shall a husband that professes no religion dwell with a wife *according to knowledge?* 1 Pet. iii. 7; and what is the reason the apostle gives for this Christian rule in marrying, but this, *That your prayers be not hindered?*

Bro. Why, sir James did not hinder your prayers, sister.

Sist. Did he not? sir James is in his grave, and 'tis not my part to say what he did; but 'tis the mutual prayers of husband and wife together that's meant in that Scripture: do you think sir James prayed with his wife?

Bro. No, I believe he did not, indeed, nor with anybody else.

Sist. And do you think that's the life of a Christian, or the manner of a Christian family, brother? You and I were not bred up so, and yet our father was a gentleman, and wanted neither family nor fortune equal to any of them. Sir James is in his grave, and I have no more to say of that; but if I were as young as I was when I married him, and were to choose again, I would not marry the best nobleman in the nation, if he was not a religious man; all enjoyments in the world are nothing without it, unless

I resolve to cast off all religion too; and where would that end!

Bro. This is just my daughter again.

Sist. Besides, brother, consider another thing: how many young women, and young men too, who have been religiously bred, has this way of marrying been a snare to? that when they come to husbands with no religion, or to giddy, loose, profane wives, they drop all their own principles, and become empty of all religion too, at last: you know how it has been with our brothers and sisters, as I hinted to you before.

Bro. There's no arguing with you, sister, who have had so much experience of it: but I tell my daughter that perhaps she may convert her husband.

Sist. I don't know my niece's case, and so I can say little to it; but if this be it, that she refuses a man for his being of no religion, she is in the right; she is a good religious child herself; my sister educated all your children very well; and if she marries a gentleman, as the times go now, that thinks religion below him, and unbecoming, as most of them do, she is undone.

Bro. So she says, and has just your arguments; that made me say you had been documenting her.

Sist. No, indeed, brother, not I; but I'll tell you what I have been; I have been a memento to the family, and do not doubt but my sister might show them the danger of it by their aunt's example: I pray God they take warning; I know she was not wanting to them in her instruction, and in cautioning them against everything that was hurtful; and if she forgot this, of cautioning them never to marry a man of no religion, then she was not that wise woman I took her for.

Bro. I know not who has cautioned her, nor who

has instructed her; but if I had not took it up very warmly, she had ruined herself with her nicety: I'll tell you how it is.

(*Here he tells her the whole story of his daughter and the gentleman, to the time of his coming from home, he not knowing what had happened since.*)

Sist. Well, brother, you will allow me to be free with you: I must needs say I think you are in the wrong.

Bro. Yes, yes; I expected that from you.

Sist. I speak my experience, brother; I would not force a child's inclination in such a case for the world.

Bro. What do you mean by inclination? she forces her own inclination; for her sister says she loves the gentleman, and has owned it; and yet upon this simple nicety she pretended to cross herself, affront the gentleman, and disoblige her father.

Sist. And will not all that convince you, then, that she acts by strength of judgment, and upon principles of conscience? If it be as you say, it is the noblest resolution that ever I heard of, since the story of St. Catherine.

Bro. Don't tell me of your noble resolutions, and your fine principles; it is a first principle, an original command of God, that children should obey their parents.

Sist. Ay, brother, where the parent commands nothing that clashes with the laws of God; but then, brother, our authority ceases.

Bro. But I am sure this match is for her advantage, and I'll make her have him.

Sist. That's a severe resolution, and, if it be against her conscience, you may fail in all you resolve upon; besides 'tis evident you ought not to resolve so.

Bro. What! am not I her father? has it not

been always the right of fathers to give their daughters in marriage? nay, to bargain for them, even without their knowledge? did not Caleb promise his daughter Achsah in marriage to him that should smite Kirjathseper, not knowing who it should be, or whether the girl should like him or no? and are there not many such instances in the Scripture?

Sist. All this is true, brother: but I dare not think the laws of God or man give parents that authority now.

Bro. Then you allow my daughters to marry who they please, without putting any weight upon my consent one way or t'other: would you give your daughters that liberty?

Sist. No, brother, you wrong me; but there is a great difference between your negative authority and your positive authority, in the case of a daughter, as there is a great difference between your authority in the marriage of a daughter and the marriage of a son.

Bro. I know my lady sister is a nice civilian: pray explain yourself.

Sist. I can take all your banters patiently, brother, and I will explain myself, contradict me if you can; I distinguish them thus: if your daughter desires to marry any person you do not like, I grant that you have power, by the law of God, to forbid her positively; the Scripture is plain, you have power to dissolve even a vow or promise of hers to marry or not to marry at all. But if your daughter is not willing to marry one you may like, I do not think you have the same right to command, for you might then command her to marry a person she may have an abhorrence of, and an aversion to, which could not be; the very laws of matrimony forbid it; she could not repeat the office of matrimony at her marriage, viz., to love and honour

him; and to promise what she knew at the same time would be impossible for her to perform, would be to perjure herself, (for the marriage promise is a solemn oath,) and to deceive her husband in the grossest manner; neither of which would be lawful for her to do.

Bro. Well, well, for all your fine harangue, I have made her do it.

Sist. Are they married then, brother?

Bro. No: but they shall as soon as I come home.

Sist. I wish her well; she is a child that deserves very well, I am sure; she is a serious, sensible, religious child, and will be an extraordinary woman; but if you force her to marry, as you say you will, remember my words, brother, you will make her miserable, as I have been.

Bro. Yes, yes, so she will; just so miserable; she will have a good husband, and about 2000*l.* a year estate; a very miserable condition truly!

Sist. All that's nothing; nor will it lessen the misery at all to a good woman; I am sure she had better go to service, or marry a good, sober, religious shoemaker; and I would do so myself if I had my choice to make again; therefore, I say it again, dear brother, remember my words; if you do it, you make her miserable, and will repent it.

Bro. Nay, nay, I am not so positive neither: I would not ruin my child, you may be sure; but I shall see when I come home.

Sist. Pray let me hear how it goes, when you come home.

Bro. So you shall, I promise you.

After this discourse he stayed but two or three days with his sister, and then went home. When he came home, to be sure the first question he

asked of his eldest daughter was, how Mr. —— did, and if he was in the house.

Da. In the house! No, sir, I think not.

Fa. Why do you think not? When was he here?

Da. Never, sir, since the evening after you went away.

Fa. Why, she has not served me so, has she?

Da. Serv'd you, sir! Nay, it is he has served you so; for he said, the last time he was here, he would wait on her again; but he has never been here since.

Fa. Then she must have used him very ill, I am sure; he had never done so else. Where is she? Call her down.

Da. Sir, my sister is gone to my aunt ——'s at Hampstead.

Fa. Very well: finely managed, I assure you! Well, I'll manage her, and all of you, if this be the way I am to be used. (*He is in a great passion.*)

Da. I believe there is nothing done to use you ill, sir, or to provoke you in the least.

Fa. What is she gone out of the house then for?

Da. Sir, you are so angry with her, when you talk with her, that you fright her; I was afraid, last time you talked to her, you would have thrown her into fits: and so we really all advised her to go home with my aunt last week, when she was in town, and stay there, till we could see what you will please to have her do.

Fa. Do! she knows what I expected she should do.

Da. As to marrying Mr. ——, sir, that she can never do; and she has talked to him so handsomely, that, sir, I assure you, he said himself he could not answer her objections; that she had rea-

sons for what she did, and he could not urge it any further.

Fa. Why, did not you say he promised to come again?

Da. Yes, he did say he would wait on her again, but he is gone into the country I hear.

Fa. Well, I'll say no more till he comes again then.

Da. Nay, if he had come again, she had resolved she would not have seen him.

Fa. Say you so! I'll be as positive as she; if she will see him no more, she shall see me no more, I'll let her know so much.

Da. I am sorry things are so; but I am sure she will never see him, if she never comes home more.

Fa. I'll try that: I'll go over to Hampstead in the morning, I'll see what I can do with her.

Her sister was now in as great a fright as before; she knew the principle her sister went upon was good, and she was very loath to have her thrust by violence into a state of life she so abhorred; and this made her take more freedom with her father than she would have done, and took more care of her sister too, lest her father should bring her away and marry her by force; so she sent a man and a horse away the same night to Hampstead to her sister, to give her notice of her father's resolution to come over in the morning, and giving her an account of what had passed, advising her to be gone out of his way somewhere else.

As the young lady had acquainted her aunt with the whole story, her aunt was so affected with it, and so abundantly justified her conduct in it, that upon this news, she told her she would place her at a friend's house a little way off, and she would

undertake to talk to her father when he came; and if she could not bring him to any reason, she would send her the next day into the country to her other aunt, the widow of sir James ——; so she sent her away in the mean time in her own coach to Hendon, a village beyond Hampstead, with a maid and a footman to attend her, till her father was gone.

In the morning, as he said he would, her father came to Hampstead, and as soon as he had saluted his sister, he asks for his daughter; his sister told him she was gone a little way to visit a friend of hers, but desired him to sit down.

She saw he was disturbed and uneasy: Come, brother, says she, be calm and moderate, and do not treat your child with so much warmth; let you and I talk of this matter; my niece has given me a full account of the whole story.

Fa. Has she so? But she shall give me another account of it, before she and I have done yet.

Sist. I find, brother, you consult your passions only in all this matter, and I must tell you they are base counsellors; I wish you would act in cool blood, and consult your reason a little too.

Bro. So I think I do, and I won't be instructed by my children.

Sist. No, no, brother, it is evident you act too violently; if you consulted your reason, I am sure it would tell you that you are all wrong. Did ever a father hurry and terrify his children so with his fury and his passions that they are afraid to see him, and ready to swoon when they hear he is coming to them? and then do you consider what a child this is, that you use thus?

Bro. I use her! she uses me I think! and abuses me too.

Sist. Be patient, brother, be patient; passion, I

tell you, is an ill counsellor; consider the circumstances of your child, and hear what she has to say.

Bro. What do you mean by hearing? I think she ha'n't heard what I have to say, when she flies thus from place to place, as if she was a thief.

Sist. That's because you do not act like a Christian, brother; you make yourself a terror to your children; this dares not see you; those at home dare not speak to you. Why, what do you mean, brother? You did not treat them thus when they were little; do you consider what they are now? that they are women grown, and ought to be treated as such; and deserving women too they are, that the world sees; and you expose yourself most wretchedly to treat them thus. I am very free with you.

Bro. How do I treat them? What, to provide a gentleman of 2,000*l.* a year for the youngest, a handsome, complete young gentleman, as any the town can produce, and every way unexceptionable; nay, she owned herself he was one she could like very well; and to have her affront him and her father, and to dismiss him of her own head without consulting me, or staying till I came to town! and this after five weeks keeping him company, and when she knew the writings were drawn for her marriage settlement; is this a decent way of treating a father? I think you are free with me, indeed, to take their parts in it.

Sist. Well, brother, suppose all this to be just as you relate it, yet if the young people could not hit it, do we not always, when we make proposals one to another for our children, make this condition, viz., If the young people can agree? And do we not put them together to talk with one another, on purpose that they may be acquainted, and see whether they can like one another or no?

Bro. Well, and so did I: has he not waited upon her ladyship, I tell you, five weeks? Was not that time enough to know whether she liked him or no?

Sist. Time enough to like or dislike, I grant it; and she tells you plainly, she does not like, and cannot marry him: what would you have? And as to putting him off in your absence, she says she told you her mind positively before you went out of town, and would have given you her reasons for it; but you treated her with so little temper, that she had no room to speak; and at last told her you would have none of her reasons, but expected she should have him: how do you answer that pray?

Bro. I knew what she had to say well enough; however, I gave her till my return to consider of it: what had she to do to turn him off without my knowledge, and affront a gentleman of his quality? it is an insult upon her father, and a scandal to the whole family.

Sist. That's all answered by what I said before, that she told you positively, before you went out of town, she would never have him, and indeed had resolved then to see him no more; for what should a young woman keep a man company for, when she resolves not to have him? Whatever you may think, brother, it would not have been very handsome on her side; besides, I can assure you, your daughters are none of those women that do anything unbecoming.

Bro. Why she did keep him company after it, for all that.

Sist. Never but once, that she might dismiss him civilly, and that was merely a force of your own upon her, because your passion with her obliged her to do that work herself, which you ought to have done for her.

Bro. Well, she's an undutiful, disrespectful creature to me; I ha'n't been an unkind father to her; but I'll let her know herself my own way.

Sist. You'll consider of that, brother, when your passion is over.

Bro. Not I; I am no more in a passion now, than I was before.

Sist. That may well be indeed; because you were then in such a passion, it seems, as disordered all your family: is passion a proper weapon to manage children with, brother?

Bro. It is impossible for any man to be thus treated by his children, and not be in a passion; ingratitude is a thing no man can bear with patience.

Sist. But who shall be judge between you, brother? For it is possible you may be in the wrong as well as your children; and take this with you for a rule in all such breaches, that generally those that are in the greatest passion, are most in the wrong.

Bro. No, no; I am sure I am not in the wrong.

Sist. That's making yourself judge, brother; I think you should let some judicious, sober, impartial person hear your child, since you won't hear her yourself.

Bro. What, do you think I'll have arbitrators between me and my children?

Sist. I hope you will act the father with them, then, and not the madman, as (I must be plain with you) I think you do now.

Bro. Yes, yes, I'll act the father with them, while they act the part of children with me, but no longer.

Sist. If God should deal so by us all, what would become of us? Think of that, brother,

when you make resolutions against your own children; and without just cause too.

Bro. Why you won't pretend this is without cause?

Sist. Truly, brother, I do not see any cause you have to be offended with your child; it is true, you brought a very fine young gentleman to court her, and I know you were pleased with the thoughts of such an alliance in your family; his estate, his person, his character, were all pleasing; but here's the case, your daughter has been religiously and virtuously educated by my sister.

Bro. By your sister only, I suppose; you might have put that in too.

Sist. Truly, brother, I do not charge you with the crime of being any way concerned in the religious part of their education.

Bro. Did I obstruct it, or blame her for it? I left them to her; it was none of my business.

Sist. That's a sad way of discharging your duty to your children, brother, in their education: but that's none of my business; we will leave that now; they have been soberly and religiously educated, whoever did it: and they are very sober, religious young women, especially this youngest, above them all; they are an honour to your family, and to the memory of my sister their mother.

Bro. But none to me, I confess that.

Sist. They will be so to you too in the end, if you know how to make yourself an honour to them.

Bro. Well, I'll make them fear me, if they won't honour me.

Sist. You are hardly in temper enough to talk to: however, let me go on; I tell you, they have been so bred, and they so well answer their education, that they are an honour to your family; their mother instilled principles of virtue, piety, and

modesty in their minds, while they were very young.

Bro. Well, I know all this.

Sist. Pray be patient; among the rest, this was one, that a religious life was the only heaven upon earth; they were her very words: that honour, estate, religion, and all human pleasures, had no relish without it, and neither pointed to a future felicity, or gave any present, at least that was solid and valuable; and on her death-bed she cautioned them never to marry any man, that did not at least profess to own religion, and acknowledge the God that made him, whatever fortunes or advantages might offer, as to this world.

Bro. She might have found something else to do when she was just at her end, I think.

Sist. Brother, let me be free with you; she had two bad examples to set before them, where the want of a religious husband had made two families very miserable, though they had everything else that the world could give; and one was your own sister.

Bro. And the other herself; I understand you, sister.

Sist. Be that, as the sense of your own conduct directs you to think, brother; that's none of my business; she was my sister, and therefore I say no more of that. But these are all digressions: the young women, your daughters, thus instructed, and thus religiously inclined, are grown up; you bring a gentleman to court one of them, who, with all the advantages his person and circumstances present, yet wants the main thing which she looks for in a husband; and without which she declares she will not marry, no, not if a peer of the realm courted her: pray what have you to say to such a resolution, that you should oppose it?

Bro. How does she know who is religious and who not? She may be cheated soonest, where she expects it least.

Sist. That's true; and she has the more need to have her father's assistance to judge with, and assist her in her choice.

Bro. I don't inquire into that part, not I.

Sist. No, I perceive you don't; she has therefore the more reason to look to herself.

Bro. This gentleman may be as religious as anybody, for aught she knows: how can she pretend to know, I say, who is religious?

Sist. 'Tis easier to know who is not religious, than who is: but this gentleman has been so kind to her, and so honest, as to put it out of all doubt, it seems: for he has frankly owned to her, that, as to religion, he never troubled his head about it; that 'tis a road he never travelled; he makes a jest of it all, as most young gentlemen now-a-days do; tells her, that his business is to choose a wife first, and then, perhaps, he may choose his religion, and the like. Is this the gentleman you would have your daughter marry, brother? is this your care for your child? is it for refusing such a man as this, that you are in a passion with your child? I blush for you, brother! I entreat you, consider what you are doing.

Bro. I will never believe one word of all this; I am sure it can't be true.

Sist. I am satisfied every word of it is true, and you may inform yourself from your other children, if you think it worth your while.

Bro. I'll believe none of them.

Sist. Not while you are in this rage, I believe you will not; for passion is as deaf as 'tis blind; but if you will cool your warmth, and let your reason return to its exercise, and to its just dominion in your soul, then you will hear and believe too: for when

we are calm, and our passions laid, 'tis easy to judge by the very telling a story, whether it be true or no; but it is not to my argument, whether it be true or not.

Bro. No! pray what is your argument then?

Sist. Why this, whether you are not in the wrong if it is true.

Bro. In the wrong! in what pray?

Sist. Why, to treat your child with such fury and ungoverned passion as you do.

Bro. Why, how must children be treated, when they are insolent and disobedient?

Sist. Even then, not with passion and heat, brother: there is no case in the world, that can possibly happen, which ought to make a father act in a passion with his own children.

Bro. No! how must he correct them then, when they do evil things?

Sist. All with calmness and affection, brother; not with rage and fury; that is not correcting them, that is fighting with them; he must pity when he punishes, exhort when he corrects; he should have the rod in his hand, and tears in his eyes; he is to be angry at their offences, but not with their persons: the nature of correction implies all this; 'tis for the child's good that a parent corrects, not for his own pleasure; he must be a brute that can take pleasure in whipping a child.

(*He sat silent here a good while, and said not a word, his conscience convincing him that she was in the right; at length he puts it off thus.*)

Bro. Well, I am not a correcting my children now; they are past that.

Sist. Yes, yes, brother, you are correcting now too; there are more ways of correction than the rod and the cane; when children are grown up, the father's frowns are a part of correction, his just re-

proaches are worse than blows; and passion should be no more concerned in that part, than in the other.

Bro. These are fine-spun notions; but what is all this to the case in hand?

Sist. Why yes, 'tis all to the case in hand; I am sorry there is so close an application to be made of it: for if we are not to be in a passion with our children even when we have just reason to correct them, and see cause to be displeased with them, sure we must not be in a passion with them when there is no cause for displeasure; I say, displeasure, for cause of passion with our children there can never be; all passion is a sin, and to sin because our children sin, can never be our duty, nor any means to show them theirs.

Bro. Does not the Scripture say, *Be angry and sin not?*

Sist. If you would read that Scripture according to its genuine interpretation, it would help to convince you of all I have said: be angry, but be not in a passion; to be angry may be just, as the occasion for it may make it necessary; but be not immoderately angry, for that is to sin, and no cause of anger can make that necessary; and therefore another text says, *Let all bitterness and wrath be put away from among you*, Eph. iv. 13. These are Scriptures, brother, for our conduct even with strangers; but when we come to talk of children, 'tis ten thousand times more binding; we cannot be in a passion at anybody without sin; but to be in a passion at our children, that's all distraction, and an abomination, and tends to nothing but mischief.

Bro. You are a healing preacher, sister; I confess there is some weight in what you say; but what can I do, when children are thus provoking?

Sist. Do! go home and consider the case maturely,

and pray to God to direct you to your duty; if you did that seriously, you would soon see that your child is not to blame, and that you are very much in the wrong to press her in a thing of this nature.

Bro. Nay, nay, don't say so neither; you may say I am in the wrong to be so angry, but you cannot say I am not very ill used; that I am positive in.

Sist. Let me hear you say so when with temper and calmness you have heard the whole case; if you will not bear to hear it from your daughter herself, hear it from her sister; and be composed and impartial, and then I shall see you will be of another mind.

Bro. I can't promise you I can have so much patience with them.

Sist. Well, till you can, you can't say you are doing the duty of a father.

Here the discourse ended, and he goes home again; and the young lady, thinking she had some encouragement from this discourse to hope that he would be calmer with her, went home too in the afternoon, and took care to let her father know it, and see her in the house; however, he took little notice of her for some time.

The next morning he called his eldest daughter to him, and began another discourse with her upon the affair, thus:

Come, child, says the father, now passion is a little over, and I am disposed, however ill I am used, to bear it as well as I can; pray give me a true account of this foolish girl, your sister, and how she has managed herself since I have been gone.

Da. What, about Mr. ———, sir?

Fa. Ay, ay; was ever any wench so mad, to affront such a gentleman as he was! I wish he had pitched upon you, my dear.

Da. It is my mercy, sir, he did not; and I desire to be thankful for it as long as I live.

Fa. What do you mean by that, child?

Da. Because I have not been forced to disoblige my father, or to marry against my mind, as my sister has been; two things I know not which are most terrible to me so much as to think of.

Fa. Why you would not have been such a fool to have run into these scruples too, would you? I have a better opinion of your sense.

Da. I desire your good opinion of me may always continue; and therefore, sir, as I am not tried, I hope you will not put a question to me that 'tis not so proper for me to answer.

Fa. Well, well, be easy, child, I have a religious man in my eye for you, I assure you; we will have no need of such foolish breaches on your account.

Da. It is time enough, sir, to talk of that.

Fa. Well then, as to your sister: you know, when I left her, I charged her to entertain him till my return, and you know what resolutions I made if she did not.

Da. Dear father, you went away in a passion; she had declared positively she would not have him, and she could not think of entertaining a gentleman after she had resolved not to have him; it would not have been handsome: however, I did over-persuade her to see him that night you went away; in hopes, truly, that she might have had some opportunity to be better satisfied in her main scruple about religion, and that she might have got it over: but, on the contrary, he made such an open declaration of his contempt of all religion, and his perfect ignorance of anything about it, that I could not but wonder at it; sure he must think we were a family of atheists, or else he did it to affront her; for he could never think it could be agreeable to

any of us: and upon this she made the same open declaration to him, that she could never think of joining herself to a man so perfectly void of principles; and so they parted, as it were by agreement.

Fa. Was it so short between them then?

Da. No, sir, there was a great deal more; they did not part with disgust at all; I am persuaded he loves her entirely, and I am sure she loves him too; I wish she did not.

Fa. And is she not a double fool then, to thwart thus both her fortune and her fancy, and all for she knows not what? Had he been a fawning hypocrite, that could have talked of religion whether he had any or no, she would have taken him.

Da. She would not have been easily deceived, sir, for she lays the whole stress of her life's welfare upon it; 'tis a solid principle with her, which she cannot go from, and which she thinks her fancy and fortune, and all things in this world, ought to submit to.

Fa. Well, but you say it was a long discourse; I don't doubt but you have heard it all, over and over: pray give me as full an account of it, child, as you can.

Da. Yes, sir.

(*Here she relates the whole night's discourse between the gentleman and her sister, as it is in the foregoing dialogue, except only that about staying for him till he was grown religious.*)

Fa. Well, I think they are both fools; he for being so open, and she for being so nice; it will be long enough before she has such another offer, I dare say.

Da. I believe that is none of her affliction, sir; she's only troubled at her disobliging you, which she had no possibility to avoid, without oppressing her conscience, and making herself miserable.

Fa. I do not see that's any of her concern.

Da. Yes, indeed, sir, it is; and I am afraid she will grieve herself to death about it.

Fa. If that had been any grief to her, she would not have acted as she has done.

Da. It is a terrible case, sir, to have so many powerful arguments press against conscience; I wonder she has been able to stand her ground against them, and I am sure it lies very heavy upon her mind.

Fa. What do you mean by arguments pressing upon her conscience?

Da. Why, sir, to name no more, here is a gentleman, who by his professed choice of her, and extraordinary proposals to her, has given undoubted testimony of his loving her very sincerely: in the next place, a splendid fortune, giving her a prospect of enjoying all that this world can offer: thirdly, a very agreeable person, and one that has by his engaging conduct, made some way into her affections; so that 'tis easy to see, she not only has a respect for him, but really loves him; and lastly, the displeasure of her father, who she never disobeyed before, and to disoblige whom is effectually to ruin herself for this world. Are not these, sir, pressing things?

Fa. And why do not they prevail with her then? And why is she so wilful?

Da. Nothing but her conscience, a sense of her duty to God, and her own future peace, has upheld her resolution; he has professed himself to be a man of no religion, and such a one she dares not marry.

Fa. I understand nothing of it, nor do I see any need to pretend conscience in the case at all; there's nothing of weight in it.

Da. I hope you cannot think but my sister would be very glad it had been otherwise.

Fa. What need she trouble herself about his religion?

Da. It is my business, sir, to give you an account of the facts, not to enter into the argument; 'tis enough that one daughter has displeased you already.

Fa. Well, well; I see she is come home again: I have nothing to say to her; I don't look upon her as any relation of mine.

Da. If you don't abate something, sir, and show yourself a little tender of her, I believe you will soon have but two daughters to provide for; perhaps not that, for I think it will break all our hearts to see it.

All that his eldest daughter could say, or that either of his sisters in the country had said, had yet no effect upon him; but he carried it so reserved to his daughter, that she appeared in the family as if she had not belonged to him, and he continued it so long, that it began to be very probable he would never alter it; which so grieved the poor young lady, that she fell very sick with it, and it was feared she inclined to a consumption; and being very ill one day, her sister, who was her fast friend and only comforter, desired she would go out a little, and take the air: so they resolved to go to their aunt's, at Hampstead; the sister's design being to persuade her to stay two or three days with their aunt; in which short journey, several strange like adventures befel them, which will gradually introduce themselves in the following discourse, which began between them as they were in the coach going to Hampstead.

Dear sister, says the eldest sister, what will become of you? Will you give way to this grief so much as to let it destroy you?

Yo. Sist. What can I do, sister? I support it as well as I can, but it sinks my spirits; 'tis too heavy for me; I believe it will destroy me, as you say.

Eld. Sist. But shake it off then, sister.

Yo. Sist. Shake it off! You talk of it as a thing in my power: no, no, sister, effects rarely cease till their causes are removed.

Eld. Sist. Nay, you would talk philosophy; I am sure philosophy would cure you.

Yo. Sist. Ay; but I am no philosopher, I hope: pray how would that cure me?

Eld. Sist. All that I mean by philosophy is reason; though women are not philosophers, they are rational creatures: I think you might reason yourself out of it.

Yo. Sist. I do talk reason, when I say, grief having seized upon my spirits, and the cause being immoveable, while that remains so, the effect will be so too.

Eld. Sist. It is not in my power to remove the cause; but yet, I think if you would hear reason, you might remove the grief, which is the effect.

Yo. Sist. And you think reasoning would do it? Pray what kind of reasoning is that?

Eld. Sist. Why, to reason but upon the folly, the madness, the injustice, nay, the sin of immoderate grief.

Yo. Sist. You begin warmly; pray let's hear the folly of it.

Eld. Sist. Why several things will convince you of its being the foolishest thing in the world: grief is a senseless, useless passion; 'tis useless, because 'tis perfectly incapable of doing any good, and only capable of doing evil: grief is indeed no passion,

but a quality, a disease of the mind, which must be cured; 'tis an evil spirit that must be cast out: besides, it is a senseless thing: for 'tis a means to no end; it aims at nothing, seeks nothing, endeavours nothing, only corrodes the spirits, stagnates the very senses, and stupifies the soul; and therefore grief was anciently represented as a viper, generated in the liver, and preying upon the vitals of the man: and when it came within a certain space of the heart, it had two ways to go: if it ascended, it quitted the hypochondriac vessels, and so possessing the brain, ended in madness; if it descended, it possessed the blood, and ended in death.

Yo. Sist. Pray end your reasoning, for I do not understand it; go back to the point proposed, what must I do? You say, shake it off: I ask, what must I do to shake it off; how can I shake it off?

Eld. Sist. Why, divert your mind, think no more of him; turn your thoughts to things that are in being; this is now a thing over; you should only esteem it as a history of things done in the ages past.

Yo. Sist. You surprise me, sister.

Eld. Sist. Surprise you, child! in what?

Yo. Sist. I am both grieved and astonished that you should have such mean thoughts of me as to think my grief is founded upon the parting with Mr. ——; I protest to you, I am so far from having the least concern of that kind upon me, that it is the only comfortable reflection I have in the world, and I give God thanks from the bottom of my soul, as often as I think of it, that I am delivered from him.

Eld. Sist. I believe you are sensible that it is better as it is; but I know it is a great struggle between principle and affection.

Yo. Sist. Not at all, sister, I am over all that; it did not hold me half an hour; when my conscience

dictated to me my real danger, the future felicity of my life, the commands of God, and the dying instructions of my dear mother: do you think the little stirrings of an infant affection to the man, was able to struggle with such an army of convictions? God forbid! no, no; he is to me as the most contemptible fellow on earth.

Eld. Sist. No, no, sister, you never thought him a contemptible fellow, I am sure; nor is he so in himself.

Yo. Sist. No, as a gentleman he is not so; he is a lovely creature, and the only man in the world I could ever say I had any affection for.

Eld. Sist. I know you loved him; nay, and do love him still; your face betrays you, sister: while your tongue named him your heart fluttered and your colour changed; I could see it plain enough.

Yo. Sist. How cruel is that now, sister! you prompt the affection to revive, as if you would recall the temptation, and assist it in a new attack upon me: I allow I loved him, and, as a gentleman so every way agreeable, I do so still: but shall I yoke myself with one of God's enemies! embrace one that God abhors! Speak no more of it, I entreat you.

Eld. Sist. That's carrying it too far: you cannot say who God abhors.

Yo. Sist. I'll put it the other way, then, to stop your mouth: Shall I yoke myself with a practical atheist! embrace one that rejects God! love him that hates my Saviour!

Eld. Sist. Nay, that's too far, too: he told you he did not hate religion.

Yo. Sist. You cavil, sister; you don't argue: I'll give it you in Scripture words: Is he not one of those who say to the Almighty, *Depart from us, we desire not the knowledge of his ways?* Did he not

openly say the same thing? Is not he not only void of the knowledge of religion, but of any desire to have any knowledge of it?

Eld. Sist. Do not take what I said ill, sister: I acknowledge he is indeed such a one; but still you love him, sister.

Yo. Sist. No, sister, as such I abhor him; the thoughts of having been but in danger of him make my blood run chill in my veins: Shall I marry a profligate! a man of no religion! nay, that has the impudence to own it! No, sister, I rejoice that I am delivered from him, and I never desire to see him more as long as I live.

Eld. Sist. And are you really got as far above it as you say you are?

Yo. Sist. Dear sister, have not you and I often lamented the loss of a religious family, even in our own father? the want of a religious conversation, the want of a father to teach, instruct, inform, and explain religious things to us? have we not seen the dreadful life our aunt, my father's sister, lived, for want of a religious husband? and the heavenly life my aunt here, our mother's sister, lives, that has a pious, sober, religious husband and family? and can you think I would ever be a wife to such another as sir James? besides, could I bear to be tied to a man that could not pray to God for me, and would not pray to God with me? God forbid! the greatest estate and finest man in the world should never incline me to such a thought: I thank God my soul abhors it; and 'tis the joy of my heart that the snare is broken.

Eld. Sist. Why what is it then that oppresses your mind thus?

Yo. Sist. O sister! you cannot ask me such a question.

Just as she said these words, came a gentleman on horseback, and galloped by the coach side, and looking into the coach, pulled off his hat to her, and having paid his compliments, he rode on: the very moment he looked in the eldest sister had dropped her fan in the chariot, and was stooping down to reach it, and so did not see him; but when she got up, looking at her sister, she found her look very pale.

Eld. Sist. What's the matter, sister, says she, (being much frighted,) an't you well?

Yo. Sist. No, says she; lend me your bottle.

(*She gives her a little bottle to smell to, and she began to come to herself.*)

Eld. Sist. What was the matter, sister? was you frighted?

Yo. Sist. I was a little disordered.

Eld. Sist. What was it? did those men that rid by say anything to affront you?

Yo. Sist. One of them did: did you not see them?

Eld. Sist. No; I heard somebody ride by, but my head was down, looking for my fan: why who was it? 'twas not Mr. ———, was it?

Yo. Sist. O yes, it was: let us go back, sister, I entreat you; I am very ill.

Eld. Sist. Why we have a long way back, and we are almost at Hampstead now; we had better go to my aunt's, we shall be there presently.

Yo. Sist. Well, let us, then; bid him drive apace.

Eld. Sist. Alas! there he is, a little before us.

(*She calls to the coachman to drive apace, and looking out of the coach, she saw the gentleman riding softly, with only two footmen, a little way off of the coach.*)

Yo. Sist. If he comes again to the coach side,

and offers to speak, I beg of you, sister, do you answer him, for I will not speak one word to him.

Eld. Sist. (*she looks out of the coach again.*) He is gone now a great way off.

They soon came to their aunt's house, and went in, the coach standing at the door; after they had been there a quarter of an hour, the gentleman, who knew well enough where they were, came to the house, and sent in their footman to tell the eldest sister he was there, and desired the favour to speak two or three words with her.

The servants led him into the parlour, and the young lady came down to him in a few minutes; he told her, that before he entered into any discourse he must assure her of two things: first,

That his overtaking them upon the road was purely accidental, and without the least design, as she might easily be satisfied by his servants and baggage, for he was just setting out on a journey of above an hundred miles, and should not return under three weeks at least; and secondly, that he had no design in calling in there to move anything to her sister concerning the old affair, but only to have two or three words with her relating to himself. You know, sister, says he, for I must still give you that name of respect, upon what terms your sister and I parted; and as I promised her I would wait on her again, and did not, I have been very uneasy lest she might think I showed her some disrespect, and that I took ill what she said to me; and truly for some time so I did. She answered, coldly, that she believed her sister had not at all been dissatisfied at his not coming again. No, madam, says he, I believe that, by the manner of the dismiss she had given me; but, however, I would not be rude to her, whatever she thought fit to say to me.

She returned, and with a little more concern than before, that she hoped, however her sister had thought fit not to go on with what was proposed, yet that she had not been rude to him. No, madam, says he, not rude. Sir, says she, as you had offered nothing to my sister but what was like yourself, very honourable, I am sure she does not so ill understand herself as to offer anything unbecoming to you. He returned, with a very obliging way of speaking, that her sister understood herself perfectly well; And, I assure you, says he, she understood my character better than I did myself. I do not rightly take your meaning, sir, says she; my sister could make no objection to your character. Madam, said he, you know very well upon what foundation your sister altered her mind, and absolutely refused any further treaty with me, viz., that I was a profane, wicked, irreligious creature: the fact was true, I owned it to her that I neither had any knowledge of religion, or desired any, for which I was a very great brute.

I think you were not very sincere, sir, says she.

O, madam, says he, I do not say I was a brute for owning it, but I was a brute for living in that horrid manner, and yet thinking that any sober woman could entertain a thought of having me.

I am very sorry, said the lady, it happened so.

I am very glad, madam, that she treated me so, replied he, and should love her ten thousand times better for it, if that be possible, than ever I did before.

Says she to him again, Sir, you are pleased to banter a little.

No, sister, says he, I don't banter; and my stopping to speak with you was for this reason; I do not ask to speak with your sister, but I beg you will tell her from me very seriously, that she has been a

better instructor to me than my father or mother, or all the tutors and friends I had in my life; she has convinced me that I was a monster, a scandalous fellow, that ought to have been ashamed to pretend to a woman that had the least sense of her education, or of Him that made her: I have reason to give thanks to God every day I live that ever I saw her face, and that I had that repulse from her: tell her, I recommend it to her to preserve that noble, heavenly resolution, which she said she had taken up, viz., never to marry any but a religious man: she is undone if she breaks it; and though I am never able to deserve her, yet I will always think of her as the mother of all that is, or ever will be, good in me, and value the memory of her accordingly. He waited no answer, but with all possible civility took his leave, and, his horses being at the door, took horse and went away. She waited on him to the door, and as he was paying his respects to her, sitting on his horse, he said to her, Dear madam, I hope you will give your sister a particular account of what I have said to you: she answered, she would not fail to do it with all the exactness possible.

As soon as he was gone, she run up to her sister, but before she could speak to her, the youngest sister cried out to her, Sister, before you speak, do not ask me to go down; for I will not see him.

Eld. Sist. Don't be so hasty; he did not desire to see you: he's gone.

Yo. Sist. Is he gone?

(*She observed, for all she was so warm at first, that when she said he did not desire to see her, she changed her countenance a little, and more when she said he was gone.*)

Eld. Sist. Truly, sister, I don't think 'tis fit you

should see him; I see by you, if he was to talk one hour with you, you'd lose all your resolution.

Yo. Sist. Perhaps that's the reason why I resolve not to see him: won't you allow me to know my own weakness? is it not enough that I have conquered myself once?

Eld. Sist. Yes, I allow it; and that you act a very prudent part, for I know you struggle with your own affections; I do not desire to press you, and never did.

Yo. Sist. I can better keep my resolution of not seeing him, than perhaps I might my resolution of not marrying him, if I saw him; though I know I am ruined if I have him.

Eld. Sist. As he is now, I don't know whether you would or no: there's a strange alteration in him.

Yo. Sist. What do you mean by an alteration?

Eld. Sist. Why he is quite another man; he talks like a man quite changed: you would have been surprised at him.

Yo. Sist. O! he has a mind to put that trick upon me: no, no, it's too late now.

Eld. Sist. What trick do you mean?

Yo. Sist. O! he told me he could play the hypocrite most nicely, and was sure he could deceive me: but it won't do; I am prepared for that.

Eld. Sist. I am sure he was no hypocrite before; he was too plain before; and I do not see why you should say he's a hypocrite now.

Yo. Sist. Because he told me he would be so; he acknowledged he had shown more honesty than discretion before, and was sorry for it; and that if he was to begin again he would take just the contrary course.

Eld. Sist. Well, I dare say he's no hypocrite now, any more than he was before.

Yo. Sist. I won't trust him.

Eld. Sist. But you may give me leave to tell the substance of his discourse.

Yo. Sist. Dear sister, do not be drawn in to lay snares for me; you would not be willing to have me deceived: why should you assist in it? I desire to hear nothing of it.

Eld. Sist. That's very disobliging, sister, to me; would I assist any man to deceive you, that have so much applauded your resolution not to be deceived?

Yo. Sist. Nay, and assisted me too in withstanding the importunities of my own affections; or else I believe I had not been able to have supported my sense of duty; and therefore I wonder you should forsake me now.

Aunt. Child, do not press your sister to hear anything: I must confess her case is wonderful nice; she loves the gentleman, she does not stick to acknowledge it; she has great scruples on her thoughts about her duty to her father, and they all sway on the same side; her father frights her with violent words and hard usage, and threatenings of turning her out of doors; against all this she stands single, in obedience to her conscience: I think we should assist her.

Eld. Sist. Dear madam, if my sister was not here I would say a great deal more; I think she has acted the noblest part, in its kind, that any young body ever did; I wish I may be able to preserve such a resolution, if ever it should be my case; and I am sure I should be far from discouraging her: but what I was going to tell her was nothing to discourage her: I wish she would let me tell it you first.

Yo. Sist. Will all my heart; tell it my aunt: I'll withdraw.

(*She goes out of the room, and the eldest sister tells her aunt what the gentleman had said.*)

Aunt. Well, niece, I do think of the two it may be still better not to tell it your sister; let us lay it up in our hearts; if it be true, and he is a reformed man, we shall perhaps hear more of him; if not, to persuade her he is really changed, is but to make her love him more, without knowing whether he ever thinks any more of her or no, and that can be no service to her.

Eld. Sist. I submit, madam, to your directions, but then I break my promise.

Aunt. You may find a time for that too.

The discourse broke off here, and her aunt finding the young lady very ill and disturbed, desired her sister to leave her there for a few days, to tell her father how ill she was, and that we thought the country might divert her a little; but that if he desired her to come home, she would return whenever he pleased. Her eldest sister did so, but all the answer she got was, She might stay there for ever, if she would, he never desired to be troubled with her any more.

The end of the third dialogue.

DIALOGUE IV.

The former dialogue having put an end to the courtship between the gentleman and his mistress for the present, and there being some interval of time between those things and the remaining part of the story, that interval is filled up with another little affair in the same family of still a nicer nature than the other, though not carried so far.

The father had frequently discoursed these things with his eldest daughter, in the case of her sister, as is to be seen in the last dialogue, and found, by her discourse, that she was pretty much of her sister's mind, in the matter of choosing a husband: but, having a gentleman in his thoughts for her, who had the character of a very sober, religious person, he made no question but he should dispose his daughter both to her satisfaction and his own.

It was with a view to this design, that he had jested with her, in one of these last discourses, that he had a religious husband in store for her, and that he hoped he should give her no occasion to play the fool, as her sister had done.

In consequence of this, he took occasion to tell her one evening after supper, that what he had spoken in a way of jest to her, at such a time, was really no jest in his own thoughts; that he had been spoken to by a certain gentleman, a considerable merchant in the city, whose eldest son had an inclination to pay his respects to her; And I assure you, my dear, says the father, he has the character of a very sober, religious gentleman; and I am sure his father and mother are very good people: indeed, the whole family are noted for a religious family, and I know no family in the whole city that have a better character.

She made him no answer at all, till he began with her again, Why are you so silent, child? said her father: have you nothing to say? Methinks, when I look back upon the disorder which the obstinacy of your sister has put us all in, I would be glad to have every difficulty removed beforehand with you, and therefore I speak early, that if you have any objections, I may hear them, and not be driven afterwards to ask people pardon for ill usage which I have had no hand in; and I would

have you use your freedom now, that I may take nothing ill from you afterwards: and thus he pressed her to speak.

Daughter. I am in no haste, sir, to marry; the times terrify me; the education, the manner, the conduct of gentlemen is now so universally loose, that I think for a young woman to marry, is like a horse rushing into the battle; I have not courage so much as to think of it.

Father. But there are a great many sober, civilized young gentlemen, in the world; 'tis hard to reproach them all, because many of them are wicked.

Da. Sir, it is those civilized people which I speak of; for even those who now pass for sober, are not like what it was formerly; when you look narrowly among them, as they are, in the gross, ten rakes to one sober man, so, among the sober men that are called civilized men, and whose morals will bear any character, there are ten atheists to one religious man; and, which is worse than all the rest, if a woman finds a religious man, it is three to one again, whether he agrees with her in principles; and so she is in danger of being undone, even in the best.

Fa. I never heard the like! Why what are my daughters made of? What, is nothing good enough in the world for you? If you all go upon such niceties, I must never think any more of marrying any of you.

Da. You had rather, sir, not think of it, I dare say, than think of seeing us miserable.

Fa. Why there is not a man on earth can please you, as you have stated it.

Da. Providence will either settle me as I would be settled, sir, or will, I hope, dispose you to be

as well satisfied with my present condition, as I am.

Fa. Why it seems you are gone mad further than your distracted sister.

Da. I hope, sir, I am in my senses, and shall be kept so.

Fa. Why it seems a religious husband won't please you: what is it you would have?

Da. I desire, sir, to live as I am, at least till something offers which is fit for me to accept.

Fa. What do you call fit, child? What can be fit, in your way of talking?

Da. When my judgment and conscience are satisfied, sir, I believe my fancy will not be very troublesome to you: if I must marry, sir, I would have it be so as I may expect God's blessing, and my father's.

Fa. I tell you nothing in the nation will satisfy your judgment and conscience, as you call it, if the notion you have of things be true.

Da. Then I am very well satisfied to remain as I am.

Fa. That's ungrateful to your father's care for you.

Da. I am sure, sir, I would not be ungrateful, nor undutiful to you; but I know not what you would have me do.

Fa. I would have you see this gentleman that I have proposed to you.

Da. I shall submit to anything you command me, sir, that is not a breach of my duty to God; I hope you will desire nothing of me that I cannot do with a quiet mind.

Fa. Well, you may see him; I hope that can be no harm.

Da. If you will please to let me know, then, how far you allow me to be in my own disposal, and how

far not; and whether I have the liberty to refuse him, if I do not like him.

Fa. Yes, if you will resolve to use your judgment, and not refuse him before you see him, but give good reasons for what you do.

Da. I think, sir, I ought to have a negative voice, without being obliged to dispute my reasons with my father, for that's just bringing me into the same condition with my sister; her reasons are good to her, but not to you, sir; and so you take her conscience of duty to God to be a contempt of her duty to you: I would not be run into the same snare.

Fa. You are mighty positive in your demanding a negative voice against your father.

Da. But I had better know my case beforehand, that I may not insist upon more than is my right, and offend you sir, in seeming to encroach upon your government.

Fa. Let me know, then, what your demand is.

Da. Sir, I think, when you propose marrying to me, the discourse of portion and settlement is in your province, and I have nothing to do with it: but I think I ought to be at liberty to like or dislike, receive or refuse the person, and that absolutely.

Fa. What, without showing any reason?

Da. No; I ought, without doubt, to tell my father my objections, and to give a due force to all the arguments my father may use to satisfy my doubts, but I ought not to be forced to like, even though I could not maintain my reasons.

Fa. And you capitulate with me for this liberty, before you see this gentleman, do you?

Da. No, sir, I do not capitulate with you, but I hope you will, on your own accord, grant me the liberty which the nature of the thing calls for; that

if I must see the gentleman, I may have the freedom to take or refuse; if not, there is no need to see him; I may be given by contract, and married by proxy, as the great people (fools, I should say) do, as well as by treaty.

Fa. Well, well, I an't a going to give you, nor to sell you; if you won't have him, you may let him alone.

Da. That's all I desire, sir; with this addition only, viz., that my father will not be displeased or disobliged, whether I take or leave.

Fa. I can't promise you that, indeed, daughter.

Da. Then I beg of you, sir, I may never see him at all.

Fa. Very well; then it shall be so; you shall never see him at all: I find you are all alike; you may look out for yourselves, if you will: but, it may be, I may'nt like your choosing any more than you like mine.

(*He rises up in a passion, and goes away, but comes in again presently.*)

Fa. I wonder what it is you would all have me do in such a case as this: here is a match proposed to your sister; how she has treated me, you know: now I have a proposal to you, where the grand objection is removed: what can you desire of a father?

Da. Sir, I desire only, that if you think fit to discourse such things as these with us, we might be able to speak for ourselves without discomposing you; we have not a mother to stand between, and make our objections, and to hear our reasons.

(*She weeps, and that moves him, especially speaking of her mother.*)

Fa. Well, that's true; it is my loss, as well as yours: come, let me hear, however, if you have any objection against the person I propose now; tell it me; I'll endeavour not to be warm.

Da. I can have no objection to a man I never saw, or heard of; but I think we should have a liberty to refuse, sir, when we come to discourse of such a thing with the person; and that is all I ask, and that we may not disoblige you, if we use that liberty; and without that liberty, I desire you will be pleased never to make any proposal at all to me, and if ever I make one myself, I will be content to be denied.

Fa. You are very positive.

Da. It seems to be so reasonable, sir, that I cannot think any children can ask less, or any father think it is too hard; it is the children that are to feel the consequences of the mistake, if there be any.

Fa. Well, that's true; come then, if you will talk with this gentleman, you shall have your liberty to take him or to leave him; have you any objection to make beforehand? If you have, let me know it; that will prevent all occasions of disgust.

Da. Will you please to hear me with patience, sir?

Fa. Yes, I will, if I can.

Da. You have heard so much said by me, sir, in my sister's behalf, that you must necessarily believe I am of the same opinion; that is to say, that I would not marry a man that made no profession of religion, upon any account whatsoever, were his estate, his person, his sobriety, his qualifications, ever so inviting. I need not give reasons for this, sir; what I have said, what my sister and my aunts have said on that account, is enough; but it is my misfortune, sir, to have another scruple beyond all this, and which the case of my sister gave no occasion to mention.

Fa. Very well; then you intend to be more troublesome than your sister, I find.

Da. I hope not, sir, because I give my scruples in beforehand; and if anything offers to you abroad,

that will shock the foundation I lay down, I hope you'll not hearken to it on my account, and then you will have no occasion to say I am troublesome.

Fa. Well, let's hear it, however.

Da. Why, sir, as I will never marry any man who does not make some profession of religion, however rich and agreeable, handsome or sober, he is; so, however serious or religious he is, I will never marry any man, whose principles, opinion, and way of worship, shall not agree with my own.

Fa. And is that your resolution?

Da. I hope it is well grounded, sir, and that you will not disapprove my reasons for it, when you please to hear them calmly, and to bear with my mean way of arguing them.

Fa. I think I was much in the right to say you would be more troublesome than your sister; however, you do your sister some kindness in it, for this extravagant humour makes hers look a thousand times more reasonable than it did before.

Da. That's what I foresaw, sir; viz., that I shall remove your displeasure from my sister, and bring it down upon myself; but I cannot help it.

Fa. Well, I shall relieve myself against all your humours; I'll talk no more of settling any of you till your curiosity is abated.

Though her father seemed to give it over thus in discourse with his daughter, yet he had gone further with the gentleman that made the proposal than he had told her; and had invited the father and mother to dinner the next day, with an intent that they should see and be acquainted with his daughters; supposing, at the same time, that they would bring the young gentleman with them.

They came to dinner accordingly; but, as the father knew well enough, that the education of their

son was in a different way from that of his daughter, and that she had declared herself so positively in that part, he had desired them privately not to bring their son to dinner. When they were come, and before his daughter was called in, the father told them how the case stood between him and his eldest daughter, and that he saw no remedy but this; that, as he had not told her anything of the design of this invitation, or that they were the family he had designed her a husband out of; so, if they thought fit to turn their eyes to his second daughter, he was in hopes she would have more wit than to run into the ridiculous scruples of the eldest. They presently agreed, that it was not at all reasonable to force the inclination of the young lady; that they saw no room to bring the opinions in religion together, in their children, their opinions at that time differing extremely, and their son being as positive, they believed, as his daughter: so they said, With all their hearts; if their son could fancy the second daughter as well, it should be the same thing to them. However, the mother of the young gentleman asked him if he would give her leave to enter into discourse with his daughter upon the subject of her scruples? He told her, With all his heart, for he would be glad to have her change her mind; because, as, on the one hand, he should be very well satisfied to bring them together, so he really thought her notions were empty and simple, and should be glad she was made wiser; But then, madam, says he, you must not discover the real design, for if you do, she will be backward to speak freely. She agreed to that, and so this private discourse ended; and his daughters being introduced, and the usual ceremonies passed, they went to dinner, the young ladies knowing nothing of the design of their being invited.

The father and mother were charmed at the conduct of the young woman; her person and manner, the modesty of her behaviour, and, above all, the politeness and pertinence of her discourse: and, something happening to be said about marrying, the father falls to rallying his daughters upon their nicety in that point, that nothing would serve them but religious men; There's my daughter ———, says he, (pointing to his youngest,) I think nothing will do for her but a parson: she refused a gentleman of 2,000*l.* a year, t'other day, because he was not religious enough for her.

No, madam, says his daughter, my father means, because he had no religion at all; hardly so much as a coach-horse; for a coach-horse often knows the way to the church-door.

That alters the case quite, said madam: why, sir, says she, you would not have married your daughter to a brute! a man without religion is a worse brute than a horse! for the horse obeys the dictates of nature, but an atheist acts against reason, nature, and common sense. I would not marry a child of mine to a man of no religion, if he had ten thousand pounds a year.

Well, says he, there's my daughter ———, (pointing to his eldest,) she goes further; she is not satisfied with a religious husband, but she must have one of her own opinion in religion, that goes to church where she goes to church, and worships just as she worships: I don't think she will ever be pleased while she lives.

Madam, says the eldest, I expected my father would be upon my bones next; my father talks of my opinion, as if I was something that nobody else is; as if I was one of the new prophets, or of some strange singular opinion, something monstrous in religion: all I say is, that, as I profess nothing but what I

think is right, and what thousands agree with me in, if ever I do marry, as I suppose I never shall, why should I not choose to have my husband and I of the same opinion, that we may serve God together?

Madam, says the old lady, your father does but jest with you; he can never oppose so reasonable a thing as that; I must confess, I think it is much to be desired; I will not say but there is a possibility of doing well without it; it may not be a sin; but I own it is better, if it can be so.

I am sure 'twould be a sin in me, says the daughter, because it would be against my conscience.

Nay madam, says the other, that's true; and you are very much in the right to insist upon it, if it be so; and no doubt, your father will be far from offering anything that may seem to be a violence upon your conscience.

I offer violence, madam! says the father; nay, they are above that; they take upon them to say, I will, and I won't, to their father; I assure you they are past my offering violence to them.

In nothing, madam, but this crabbed business of marrying, says the daughter, and there indeed we do take some liberty with my father.

Well, sir, says the old lady, you must allow liberty there; marriage is a case for life, and must be well considered; and the young ladies are to bear it, fall it how it will, you know, for better or worse; they had need be allowed some liberty there.

Besides madam, says the youngest, all the liberty we take is in negatives only; we don't offer to take anybody that my father don't like, only we don't care to take such as we don't like ourselves.

The old gentleman then put in: Upon my word, sir, says he, I think your daughters are in the right; for certainly, though we may refuse to let them marry where they may choose, yet I can't think we

should deny them the liberty to refuse what we may offer; or else we may as well give them in marriage, as was done in old days, and never let them see one another.

The eldest sister turned her head towards her father at this, but said nothing.

I understand you, Betty, says her father; but she said nothing still; and the old lady, finding the discourse pinched a little hard, begun some other talk, and soon after, the men withdrawing, left the ladies together.

When the men were gone; Hark ye, says the old gentlewoman, I was willing to break off the discourse just now, because I was afraid it was offensive to your father; but pray let us talk a little more to you, madam; I fully approve the resolution of your youngest sister, but methinks yours is a little uncharitable, (speaking to the eldest.)

Eld. Sist. I was very much obliged to you, madam, for breaking off the discourse; for my father is passionate, and is sometimes so out of temper with us upon these points, that we are greatly grieved at it, and particularly that he will not give us leave to speak.

Yo. Sist. I am sure it has almost broke my heart.

Old Lady. I am very sorry for it; for indeed I think yours is nothing but what every woman that is a Christian ought to think herself obliged to: What dreadful doings must there be, when a religious woman marries a wretch that is a despiser of God! A Christian to be linked to an infidel! One that serves God to be joined to one of God's enemies! and then to love such a man too! the very thought is enough to fill one with confusion! take it which way you will, it is equally dismal. First, to be married to him, and not love him, that's a hell upon earth! and to love him! one that we must reflect

on as a limb of the Devil! a son of perdition! to embrace one that God abhors! to have the affections bound to one that God hates! what contradictions are these! what horror must fill the soul while they live! and what dreadful thoughts must crowd into one's mind, if such a man should come to die before us! Dear young lady, says she, you are happy that you could defend yourself against such a proposal.

Eld. Sist. But, madam, your charge upon me is a little hard; I think the arguments are as strong almost on my part as my sister's, though they are of another nature.

Old La. No, I can't say so, madam; it is true, there is something to be said in your case, but nothing so essential as in the other; and, I said, methinks it looks as if you wanted charity: I hope, child, you do not think all opinions but your own are fatal to be professed.

Eld. Sist. No, madam, not at all: I hope there are good people of all persuasions; but if I did not think my own best, how could I answer the cleaving to it myself?

Old La. So far you are right.

Eld. Sist. Then, madam, though in charity I ought to allow others to be good Christians, and that I should and do keep up a friendly correspondence with many who dissent from my judgment in religious matters, yet there is a great deal of difference between charity to them, and union with them.

Old La. You have studied the point thoroughly, I perceive; I understand you perfectly; pray go on.

Eld. Sist. Madam, in discourse with my father, I could never use any freedom, or obtain leave to propose my scruples, with the reasons of them: but I hope you will allow me liberty.

Old La. With all my heart, madam, for I am glad to enter into so curious a debate with you.

Eld. Sist. Religion, madam, without-doors, is one thing, religion within-doors is another; in the town among my acquaintance, and in the neighbourhood, a due charity to every one is what I think the Christian principle calls for, and I converse freely with good people of every opinion, extending charity to all in lowliness of mind, esteeming every one better than myself; but within-doors the case alters; family religion is a sociable thing, and God should be worshipped there with one heart, and with one voice: there can be no separation there, without a dreadful breach both of charity and duty.

Old La. You start a new thing to me, indeed, and it is somewhat surprising.

Eld. Sist. It may be true, madam, that there may be divers opinions in a nation, without breach of charity; but I believe it is impossible it should be so in a family, without breach of affection: what union, what oneness of desires, what perfect agreement (without which a man and wife can never be said to discharge the duty of their relation) can there be where there is a diversity of worship, a clashing of opinions, and an opposition of principles?

Old La. But, child, you carry it too high; if they differ in principles, indeed, there is something to be said; but we are talking of a difference in opinion only, where the fundamentals may be the same.

Eld. Sist. Madam, I recall the word *principles*, then, and join with you to confine it to *opinion* only; but 'tis the same thing in its proportion; the union can never be perfect while the differing sentiments of things leave room for disputes between them: for example, madam; the differing forms of worship; one will pray by a book only, the other without a book wholly; this is as light a difference as can be spoken of: but how shall God be worshipped with

the united voice and affections of the whole family, even in this case? what helps will two such relations be to one another in praying to God, either by themselves, or with their families?

Old La. Upon my word, you sensibly affect me now with it.

Eld. Sist. It is not enough, madam, that they, being sincerely religious apart, shall worship God in their own separate way, though better so than not at all; but the zeal, the affection, the uniting their hearts in their worship, their praying with and for one another, this, alas! is all lost. Then say it be in the public worship; there they may make a woful separation; God, that has made them one, is served by them as two; God has joined them together, and they part asunder in their serving him; God has made them one, and yet they cannot worship him as one: how does this consist, madam?

Old La. I see you are full of it.

Eld. Sist. In their public worship, sacraments, &c., neither one heart or one voice goes with their worship: though they communicate in the same ordinance, they set up two altars; one worships here, and one there; and though their faces are both set heavenwards, perhaps they turn back to back as soon as they go out of their doors to the public worship of God.

Old La. You are very clear in it, indeed, madam.

Eld. Sist. This is not all, madam; there are several family circumstances besides these, which make an union of opinion absolutely necessary: as first, family worship is a thing without which, families, however privately and separately devout, are coupled with heathens, Jer. x. 25, *Pour out thy wrath upon the heathen, and upon the families which call not upon thy name:* whatever there may in public worship, there should always be an exact har-

mony in private; and how can this be, where either of them dissents from the manner? If there is a discord in the manner, there can be no concord in the performance, no union in the affections; in a word, their prayers will be hindered, and who would be thus unequally yoked?

Old La. I expected you would name that Scripture, though it is certain that was spoken principally to those who married with unbelievers, which is a different case.

Eld. Sist. Well, madam, but to come to another case: suppose the husband and wife we are speaking of have children, what foundation of eternal schism is there in the family! some of the children adhere to the father, some to the mother; some worship in this mount, and some nowhere but at Jerusalem; some go with the father, some with the mother; some kneel down with the father, some with the mother; till, as they grow up, they really learn not to kneel down at all: family education, united instruction, caution, example, they are all dreadfully mangled and divided, till in the end they come to nothing, and the children grow out of government, past instruction, and are all lost. These, madam, are some of the reasons I would have given my father, (if he would have had patience with me,) why, in his late proposal he had to make, I desired that I might be at liberty to choose by my own principles, and not at random, as too many do.

Old La. But, madam, do you not allow that if both parties are sincerely pious and religious they may make allowances to one another, and make conscience of hindering and pulling back one another in the duties of religion?

Eld. Sist. Truly, madam, as to that, two things offer to my view, for I have often considered them both: first, the more sincere in religion either of

them are, the more fixed in principle and opinion it is likely they will be, and the further from making abatements to one another; and especially, secondly, in the great article of educating and instructing their children; for what tender mother, that having fixed her opinion, as she thinks, in the best manner and way, could bear not to have her children brought up in the same sentiments of religion, which she thinks most agreeable to the revealed will of God? and the more conscientious and religious she was, the more steadily she would cleave to it as her duty; and the like of the man; so that here would be a constant heart-burning and uneasiness.

Old La. Truly, madam, I think your reasons good, and you guard them so well, with such self-evident conclusions, that I cannot think your father can desire you to break through them: if you think it will be for your service, I'll mention it again to him.

Eld. Sist. If you do, madam, I desire to be absent; for he will not bear it from me.

Old La. Let me alone for that.

When the old lady had done this conversation she began to call for her husband and the father; so the young ladies withdrew: when she was come to them she applied herself to the father and her husband in a few words.

Wife. Upon my word, says she to her husband, the young lady has more religion in her than all of us, and a clearer sight into the particular parts of a religious life than any that ever I met with before.

Fa. Why, says the father, have you had a battle with my Betty?

Wife. No, upon my word, we have had no battles; I have not been able to open my mouth against one word she says: she is able to run down a whole

society of doctors in these points; I am a perfect convert to all she says; and though I wish, from my soul, my son had such a wife, yet I would not for the world they should come together at the price of putting the least violence upon such noble principles, so solidly established, and so firmly adhered to; and I defy all mankind to confute her.

Hus. You prompt my curiosity; I wish you could tell us a little of the story.

Wife. A little! I can easily repeat it to you; 'tis impossible I should forget it: but, it may be, you, sir, (turning to the father,) may not care to hear it.

Fa. Yes, yes; I would very willingly hear it, though I did not care to hear it from her.

Wife. Well, then——

(*Here she gives them a full account of all the discourse above.*)

Hus. I never heard anything more solid, and intimating a thorough sense of religion, in my life; I wish my son and she were both of the same opinion, then, for a woman of such principles can never be fatally mistaken in opinion.

Fa. I confess I would never give her an opportunity to explain herself thus with me; but I assure you I am so moved with it, that I will never offer to impose upon her again.

Wife. Then you see, sir, it was an error to be so angry with your child as not to hear her; I fear you have done so with both of them.

Fa. Truly, I have; but I say now I have been wrong to them both; and, indeed, more to my youngest daughter than to my eldest: for she refused the gentleman because he really had no religion at all; and yet I was in a violent passion with her.

Wife. Nay, that was hard indeed; for if there be all this to be said why a woman should not marry a

man of a different opinion in religion, there must be much more to be said why she should not marry one that despises religion: and this, indeed, I said to your youngest daughter, applauding her conduct, though I did not know that you had used her hardly on that account.

Fa. I would be obliged to you, madam, to let me know what discourse you had with her too, for that affair is still depending.

Wife. With all my heart; my discourse was not long.———

(*She repeats what she had said to the youngest daughter.*)

Fa. Indeed, madam, you are right; the thing is so indeed; but he was a pretty gentleman, and had a very noble estate, and I was mightily pleased with the thoughts of the match, and that made me more passionate with the child than I should otherwise have been.

Wife. But how came she to know he was such a one?

Fa. Truly, his own folly too; he told her so directly, in so many words; owned he had not troubled his head about religion, and did not intend it; made a banter and jest of religion in general; told her, it was a road he had never travelled, and that he intended to choose a wife first, and then, perhaps, he might choose his religion.

Wife. Nay then, either he had no conduct, or no affection for her.

Fa. As to the last, he not only professed a great deal of affection, but chose her out from the rest, (and you know she is the youngest, for I designed my eldest for him,) and made her the particular mistress of his choice; and I verily believe loved her very well; nay, the girl cannot deny but she had a

kindness for him; and indeed he is a most lovely gentleman.

Wife. She has acted a noble part indeed; and the more affection she really had for him, the more of a Christian she has shown in her conduct.

Fa. So you would say indeed, if you knew all her conduct, and knew the person too.

Wife. If it be not improper, I should be glad to know the person.

Fa. Madam, I should be loath to name him to his prejudice; and if you think it will be so, I hope you will let it go no further.

Wife. I promise it shall never go out of my mouth without your leave.

Fa. Why, it is young Mr. ———, a gentleman I believe you have heard of.

Wife. Heard of him! we know him intimately well: but I am surprised at it, upon an account that I believe will surprise you too.

Fa. What can that be?

Wife. Why, it is true, that gentleman had no religion: poor gentleman! he came of a most unhappy stock; there never was any religion in the family; but yet this may be said of him, he was a modest, sober, well-behaved gentleman; you never heard an ill word come out of his mouth, nor found any indecent action in his behaviour.

Fa. That's true; and I thought that a great matter, as the youth go now.

Wife. But I can tell you more news than that of him; he is become the most pious, serious, religious gentleman, in all the country.

Fa. You surprise me indeed, now.

Wife. I assure you, 'tis no copy of his countenance; 'tis known, and he is valued and honoured for it by all the gentlemen round him, and he be-

haves himself with so much humility, so much serious gravity, that, in short, 'tis the wonder and surprise of all that know him.

Fa. Pray how long has this alteration appeared in him?

Wife. About three months, I believe.

Fa. I wish you had told my daughter this.

Wife. It was impossible I should have brought such a thing in, that knew nothing of the circumstance.

Fa. Nay, if you had, she would not have believed a word of it; on the contrary, she would have taken it all for a trick of mine, and that I had invited you hither on purpose to bring in such a story.

Wife. Let me alone for that again another time; I hope you will give the young ladies leave to return this visit; I design to invite them to come and see me.

Upon this foot the discourse ended for that time, and all thoughts of the match for the eldest daughter with the son of that gentlewoman being laid aside for the present, the old lady, at parting, in a very friendly manner, invited the young ladies to her house, and they promised to come, and the father said aloud he would come and bring them.

It was not long before the young ladies put their father in mind of his appointment; for being mightily pleased with the old gentlewoman, they had a great mind to pay the visit, that the acquaintance might be settled. Their father appointed the next day, but being interrupted just at the time he intended to go, he caused them to go without him, and send the coach back for him to come after them when his business was done.

While they were here, the good old gentlewoman, who entertained them with great civility, diverted them with everything she could think of; and after

abundance of other useful chat, they fell to talking the old stories over again, about religious husbands, and the necessity there was to have both husband and wife join their endeavours for propagating family religion. The youngest daughter repeated her mother's maxim; Madam, says she, it was a rule my mother gave us at her death, and which I see so much weight in, that I desire to make it the foundation upon which I would build all my prospects of happiness, viz., that a religious life is the only heaven upon earth. I have added some other things to it since, which my own observation directs me to, but which I believe you will allow to be in their degree just such as these, viz., that a religious family is one of the greatest comforts of a religious life: that where both husband and wife are not mutually, at least if not equally religious, there can never be truly a religious family: that therefore for a religiously inclined woman to marry an irreligious husband, is to entail persecution upon herself as long as she lives. The old lady replied, I find, madam, as young as you are, you have studied this point very well. Indeed, madam, said the eldest sister, my sister has had occasion for it; for she has been hard put to it, what with the offers of an extraordinary match, my father's violent passion, and, among ourselves, madam, not a little the importunity of her own affections, that for my part, I must confess, I wonder she has been able to stand her ground. They are three powerful arguments, I acknowledge, said the old lady: pray, madam, as far as it may be proper, let me know something of the manner; you need not mention persons. I am not inquisitive on that score, I assure you. If my sister give me leave, madam, says the eldest. The youngest said, she left her at liberty. Why then, madam, says she, my father ———.

(*Here she gives her an abridgment of the whole story, but without the most extravagant part of her father's passion, that it might not reflect upon him.*)

Well, madam, says she, I will not say all my thoughts on this surprising story, because your sister is here; for 'tis a rule with me, never to praise any one to their face, or reproach any behind their backs: but it is an extraordinary story indeed; and turning to the youngest sister, she said to her very seriously, I pray God fortify you, child, in such resolutions, and grant that you may have the true end of them fully answered; that, if ever you do marry, it may be to a man as uncommonly serious, pious, and sincere, as you have been inimitably resolute in refusing such great offers, for the want of it. Then, turning to her eldest sister, says she, This surprising story puts me in mind of another story, which a very good man, an old acquaintance of ours, told me the other day, and which, they say, has just now happened to a young gentleman that he knows in the country; it is a pretty way off too, but he told us his name; I believe my husband knows the name, and I tell you the story for your sister's encouragement: who knows, but she may be a means, by such unexampled conduct, as this of hers is, to bring the gentleman she has had upon her hands to some sense of his condition!

There is a gentleman in that country, of a very good family, and of a very great estate, but young, and, I think he said, a bachelor; he is not above six-and-twenty, and has between two and three thousand a year; it seems, he is a most accomplished, well-bred man, a handsome, charming person; and everything that could be said of a man, to set him out, he said of him: he had, indeed, been of a family, he said, that had been emi-

nently wicked, so that the very name of religion had scarce been heard of among them for some ages; and young master, said my friend, could not be said well to be worse than his father and grandfather who went before him.

However, it happened, it seems, that he went to London; I think, says she, my friend said 'twas last winter, and when he came back, he was strangely melancholy and dejected, and quite altered in his conversation; instead of riding abroad and visiting the gentlemen, and receiving visits from them, he shunned all company, walked about his gardens and woods all alone till very late in the night, and all his servants wondered what ailed him; that one night they were in a great fright for him, knowing he was out on foot, and alone; when, about ten o'clock at night, he came in with a poor honest country fellow with him, that lived almost three miles off; that the next day he took that poor man home to his house, and sent for his wife and children, who all lived before in a poor cottage on the waste, and provided for them; gave the poor man a farm rent-free for twelve years, which always went for 22*l.* a year, with a good house; lent him a stock for manuring it too, and made him a bailiff of the manor, and, in short, made a man of him: whereupon, everybody said that the esquire had been in some great danger or other, and the poor man had saved his life; and, when somebody happened to say as much to him one day, he answered, Yes, that poor man had done more than saved his life, for he had saved his soul.

It seems, this poor labouring wretch, though miserable to the last degree, as to this world, was yet known to be a most religious, serious Christian, and a very modest, humble, but knowing and sensible man, and he had been discoursing good things

with him, and from that time forward the poor man was scarce ever from him; that it was observed by some of the servants, that the next morning after the poor man came home with him, he came again, and brought a Bible with him, which was left in the young gentleman's chamber, and that this poor man and he were often locked up an hour or two together, almost every day; that next market-day the poor man went to the next market-town, upon some business for the gentleman, and brought home a new Bible, and several other religious books, and that his master was continually reading them: in short, our friend tells us, said she, that he is become the most sober, religious Christian, that, for a man of his fortune and quality, has ever been heard of, and that he is admired by all the country for it.

I tell you this story, madam, turning to the youngest sister, to confirm you in your resolution, and to let you see that there are some religious gentlemen in the world still, and that the gentlemen may be ashamed when they pretend to say religion is below their quality; for my friend says, that this gentleman is, with his religion, also the humblest, sweetest tempered creature in the world, ready to do good offices to the poorest of the country, and yet mannerly and agreeably pleasant with the greatest; and his family is a little pattern of virtue to all round them.

Ay, madam, says the eldest, 'tis such a gentleman my sister would have: But, says her sister, where are they to be found? I never expect it. Pray, madam, says the eldest sister, in what part of the world does this black swan, this unheard-of, nonsuch thing of a gentleman live? I really forget the place, madam, says the old lady, but it is somewhere in Hampshire.

She perceived, at that word, both the young ladies changed a little, and looked at one another; so she turned her discourse off to some other subject, and left them in the dark as to the name of the gentleman; for she perceived they both guessed at it, or suspected it.

When they had taken their leave, and the two sisters were in the coach coming home, says the eldest sister to the other, Did you observe Mrs. ———'s story of the gentleman in Hampshire? Yes, said the other, I did; and I believe you fancy 'tis the same person we know of. It is very true, says the eldest, I did think so all the while she was telling the story; and I expected she would name him, but I was loath to ask her his name. I am glad you did not, says the other, for I know no good it can be to me to hear it, one way or other, now he is gone. Why would not you be glad to know that he was really such a one as she has described? says the eldest. Yes, truly, for his own sake I should, said her sister; but it is nothing to me now; I had rather never have him mentioned at all to me, upon any occasion whatever.

After they were come home, their father, who had been engaged all the while, had sent the coach back for them, with an excuse for his not coming; was very inquisitive to know of them what discourse they had had; and, his eldest daughter telling him one story and another story, he would cry, Well, was that all? For he expected she had broke the thing to them. No, says the eldest, she told us a strange story in Hampshire; and with that repeated the passage word for word. Her father took no notice of it at that time, but two or three days after, as they were at supper, he says to his eldest daughter, Betty, who do you think the

gentleman in Hampshire is, that Mrs. B——— told you the story of? I cannot tell, says she; pray who was it? Even as I thought when you told of it, said her father, for I had heard something of it before; it is nobody else but Mr. ———, the same your wise sister there thought fit to treat with so much ill manners.

Nay, sir, says the eldest, do not say my sister treated him with ill manners; for he owns the contrary to that himself: but, how are you sure of it, sir, that it is he? Why, I have had the story, says her father, from her husband, who is greatly affected with it, and he named his name to me, not knowing in the least that I knew anything of him.

Truly, says the eldest, I am very glad of it for his sake, but it does not signify a farthing to her now; for, if he was to come to her again to-morrow, with all the sobriety and reformation about him, she would have nothing to say to him.

Why so, child, says the father, did you not own she loves him? Yes, says the daughter, before she came to know what a creature he was. Well, then, says the father, if that be removed, and he is become another man, she will love him again; for she had no other objection against him, had she? No, sir, says the daughter, she had no other objection; but she will never believe him, let his pretences to religion be what they will. Why so? says the father. Because, sir, he told her, that if he had known her mind, he would have pretended to a world of reformation and religion, and that he did not doubt but he could be hypocrite enough to cheat her.

Nay, if he has been so foolish, I know not what to say to it, says the father; let it rest as it is: if she will not have him, whether he be religious or not religious, then the objection of his being not re-

ligious was a sham and a cloak, and she stands out in mere obstinacy against her own interest, purely to affront her father; let her go on, till she comes to be convinced by her own misfortune; I'll meddle no more about it.

The eldest sister failed not to relate this story very particularly to her sister, who, very gravely musing on the particulars, answered her sister thus, after several other sober and religious expressions:

Dear sister, says she, this thing has been affliction enough to me; but my father's conduct has always made it double; because he cannot talk of it without resentment and unkindness: if it be really so, that this is the gentleman Mrs. B——— told us the story of yesterday, I should rejoice; nay, though I am loath to be cheated, and what he said of playing the hypocrite with me has made me the more backward to give credit to outsides, yet, were I sure it was a real work of God in him, and that he was become a religious gentleman, you know I have affection enough to rejoice on my own account, and to entertain him after another manner than before: but yet two things make it still remote from me; first, that I have no demonstration of the truth of the fact: and secondly, that, if it is so, he has made no step towards me, and perhaps never may; and you know, sister, continued she, 'tis no business of mine till he does.

Why, that's true, says the eldest sister; but what must be done then?

Done! says she, let it alone; let it rest till we hear something or other of it in the ordinary way of such things.

But what must we do with my father? says the eldest, for he is always talking to me about it.

Do! says the other, give the same answer to him from me, as I do to you.

Then, says the eldest, I am sure he will never rest, till he brings it about again; for he is strangely intent upon it.

Let that be as pleases God, I will be wholly neuter, says the youngest sister.

Some time after this discourse, the father, having some occasion, for his health, went down to the Bath, and taking all his daughters with him, they continued there some months; in which time they contracted an acquaintance with a lady and her two daughters, who came thither from Hampshire. The old lady had been a widow of a gentleman of quality, by whom she had had two daughters, but was now married to an eminent clergyman in the country where she lived; and they were all together at the Bath, and lodged in the same apartments with these ladies.

It happened one day after dinner, talking freely together about marrying religious husbands and wives, the eldest daughter, as what is always much upon the mind, will be, in proportion, much upon the tongue, insisted in discourse upon the misery of unequal matches, and how unhappy it was, either to husband or wife, when a religious, pious, sincere Christian, whether man or woman, was married to another, who had no sense of religion; and she gives a long account of a relation of their father's, but without naming their aunt, how good a husband she had in all other respects, how comfortably and pleasantly they lived, but only for that one thing; and then she told them, still without naming anybody, how many odd tricks sir James served his lady, and the like.

Well, madam, says the old clergyman, I can tell you such a story of a lady in our county, as I believe you never heard the like; I do not know the woman, says the doctor, but I know the gentleman

intimately well, and have had a great deal of religious conversation with him, upon the occasion I shall tell you of.

He courted a young lady, says the doctor, but whether she lived in our county, or city, or where, he is perfectly mute, only that he often tells her Christian name; and, seeing he seems resolved to conceal her person, nobody will be so rude to press him on that head.

The gentleman, says the doctor, is of a very good family, has a noble estate, a comely person, and a complete courtly education, and, till this happened, was almost always at London.

His mistress must be little less than an angel in human shape, by his description, but that we give no heed to; for, madam, says the old doctor, you know, men in love give themselves a liberty that way; but, however, after all things were agreed, and the writings drawing, it seems, she threw him off entirely, and refused him merely because she found he was a man of no religion.

Says the eldest sister, How could she know that, sir? he was not so foolish to tell her so himself, I suppose.

Yes, says the doctor, he did. Why then, says the sister, I suppose he was very indifferent whether he had her or no. Indeed, says the doctor, one would think so, and I said so to him; but he told me that it was so far from that, that he had taken up his resolution never to have any other woman, if she were the richest, best, and most beautiful creature alive.

Then perhaps the lady has a superior fortune to him, besides her other qualifications, says the sister. No, just the contrary, says the doctor. But, madam, says he, I'll tell you the history of this gentleman, if it is not too long for you; 'tis a story cannot be un-

profitable to any one to hear, especially to you ladies who have taken up such happy resolutions about marrying none but religious husbands. The ladies bowed, in token they desired him to go on with the story. So the doctor went on.

Nothing touched this gentleman so near, says he, after he was gone from his mistress, as to reflect what kind of a wretch or monster he was, that a virtuous young lady, and one who he had reason to believe had no dislike of him, should be afraid to marry him for fear of being ruined, and that she should think if she took him, she declared war against Heaven, and renounced all pretensions of duty to her Maker.

(*Here he related the whole story, his talk with himself, the discourse at the chocolate house, his retreat into the country, his happening to hear the poor countryman at prayer, his conversation with him upon the way, and his conduct afterwards, all in the manner as related before.*)

We must suppose the sisters to have much less sense of religion than they were known to have, and particularly less sense of the case itself, in which it was easy to know they were nearly concerned, if they were not very much moved with the particulars of this story; and no sooner had the doctor finished his relation, with some very handsome reflections upon it, but the sisters longed to withdraw, to compare their own thoughts together, where they could do it with freedom.

But the eldest daughter went further; for though, perhaps, her curiosity was not greater than her sister's, yet as her courage was greater, and her concern in it less, she was resolved to get the name of this gentleman if possible; accordingly, at length, she asked the doctor if the name of this gentleman was a secret. No, madam, says the doctor, the

whole neighbourhood know the story in general, and it is nothing at all to his dishonour. No, indeed, sir, says she, but just the contrary; and if it was otherwise, I would not have asked his name. Indeed, madam, says the doctor, his name is no secret; it is Mr. ———, the eldest son of sir Thomas ———, by whom he enjoys an estate of 2000*l.* a year, and after his uncle, who is very old, he has near a thousand pounds a year more entailed upon him.

The two sisters had heard too much to hold any longer, the youngest especially, who pretending some indisposition, withdrew, and her sister soon after. When her sister came to her, she said, Well, child, what do you say to this story? There is no room to think there can be any design in this old gentleman, or any hypocrisy in the particulars, if they are true.

Her sister said never a word, but she found she had been crying, and that she was still too full of it to speak; so she let her alone awhile, till, after some time fetching a great sigh, which gave her passions some vent, says the youngest, Why, what do you say to it? I say to it, says the eldest sister, I can say neither less or more to it than what the two disciples said to one another, going to Emmaus, about our Saviour's discourse to them, after he was gone, *Did not our hearts burn within us when he talked to us?* I am sure mine did, says she. Ay, and mine too, says the youngest; but it is all nothing to me now. Now, says the eldest sister, if all the story be true, it may be something to you still; for, you see, the doctor says he is resolved to have nobody else. I give no heed to that, says the youngest sister, for the tables are quite turned now between us, and he ought to refuse me now, for the very same reason that I re-

fused him before; for I have not religion enough for such a convert as this, I am sure, any more than a man without any notion of a Deity, had religion enough for me. Well, well, says her sister, let Providence, which brings all things to pass its own way, work as he sees fit; I dare say, as my aunt said, we shall hear more of it.

They had very little discourse at that time but what ended thus: but the eldest sister had a great mind her father should hear the story too, if possible, before they left the place; and she resolved to take an opportunity to bring it about, if she could; but she was happily prevented by the forwardness of her father to complain of his daughter's nicety on all occasions: for in discourse with the doctor and his lady, the young ladies on both sides being absent, took a liberty to exclaim vehemently how foolish one of his daughters had been, and how she had obstinately cast off a gentleman of such and such qualifications, as before. My dear, says the doctor's lady to him, pray tell Mr. ——— the story you told the young ladies yesterday. With all my heart, said the doctor; so he repeated the whole story.

The father was exceedingly surprised at the particulars, but more when the doctor told him the name of the gentleman; however, he held his tongue, as it happened, and did not let the doctor know how near it related to his family; but in the evening, taking his opportunity, he calls his eldest daughter to him, Hark ye, Betty, says he, did the doctor tell you a story t'other day of a gentleman in Hampshire? Yes, sir, says she. And was your sister by? says he. Yes, sir, says she. And do you know that this is the same Mr. ——— that we know of? says her father. Yes, sir, says she; he told us his name. Well, and what does your sister

say to it? says he. She says little, sir, says his daughter; but she cannot but be moved with it, for 'tis a surprising story. I dare say, says her father, I shall hear of him again; she won't turn him off again, I hope; I am sure she does not deserve him now. She says so herself, says the daughter, that he ought to refuse her now for the same reason that she refused him. Well, says the father, we shall certainly hear of him again, I am fully persuaded; he will have no rest till he comes to see her again.

A few weeks after this they returned to London, and the eldest sister, being impatient to see her aunt, and to give her some account of these things, they went both away to Hampstead; when they came thither, she failed not to give her aunt a particular account of all these passages, as well that which had happened at their visit to the merchant's lady in London, as what had happened at the Bath, all which, but especially the last, were wonderfully surprising and agreeable to their aunt. Well, niece, says the aunt to the youngest sister, what do you think of these things? I can say little to them, madam, says she; I am glad, for his sake, that God has opened his eyes. But is it no satisfaction to you, child, says her aunt, that you have been so far the instrument of it? Alas! madam, says she; I the instrument! I have been none of the instrument, not I. Yes, yes, replies her aunt, you have, and he acknowledges it too: and, turning to the eldest sister, says she, I think, child, now you may perform your promise, and tell your sister what he said to you when he called here as he went out of town. Yes, madam, says she, so I think too.

(*Here she gives her sister a full account of what he had said, as before.*)

I think you might have told me this before, says the youngest sister. Nay, sister, replied she, did

you not take me short, and forbid me telling you anything, and withdrew out of the room, and bid me tell it my aunt? Why that's true, I did so, says she again; and I have been so confused, that I know not when I do well, and when I do ill. Indeed, niece, says her aunt, I also obliged her not to tell you: for I concluded, if there was anything in it, we should hear of it again; and if we did not, it could do you no service.

While they were talking thus, a coach stopped at the door, and a servant brought word, their father, and another gentleman with him, was below stairs.

It will be necessary here to leave this part awhile, and bring forward the story of the young gentleman, as far as it is needful to the coherence of things; the story also will be very short.

The young gentleman, having, as has been said, taken his new tutor, the poor countryman, into the house with him, received so much assistance from his advice, and had daily such instruction in religious things, from the wholesome, plain counsels, of this humble poor creature, that the benefit of them soon appeared in his conversation, and his reformation soon became visible in the general course of his life; he kept company with the soberest, gravest, and most religious persons, that he could find; he kept a most sober, regular, reformed family; and, seeming to resolve to reside pretty much there, for the better government of his family, he took in a young minister of an extraordinary good character to be his chaplain, and caused every servant who appeared disorderly or vicious to be put away out of his house.

These, as the natural consequences of a sincere work upon his own mind, were the visible product of that blessed change, and indeed an agreeable evi-

dence of that sincerity of it; but they were far from being the sum of things; for, in a word, he proved to be a most pious, sincere Christian, in all his ways; and as this was attended with a natural sweetness in his disposition, modesty and generosity in his manner, and an excellent temper, free from all manner of pride or hypocrisy, it made him perfectly agreeable to all sorts of people; those who were not like him, valued and honoured him, and the sober, religious part of men, were delighted in him beyond expressing.

He went on thus for near two years; lived generally in the country; and if he came to London, as occasion required, yet it appeared that his choice was rather for the country; especially, because he could not be long from his faithful assistant, the poor clergyman, who was upon all occasions, as we may say, clerk of the closet to him, and with whom he kept up a most religious but secret conversation, and had retirements with him, which none were acquainted with but themselves.

But in all this enjoyment of himself, and the retired life he had now placed his delight in, he found something still wanting too, as well to complete his happiness here, as to forward his progress in things of an eternal and durable nature; and he began to say to himself, that he had robbed himself of much of his comfort, in neglecting so long to have the assistance of that blessed creature, whom God had made the first instrument to touch his mind with a sense of good things.

These thoughts dwelt upon his heart a great while, and he found himself very uneasy: it occurred to him, that certainly, as it had pleased God to make that young woman give him the alarm, and strike his soul with the first sense of his wretched condition, he had certainly furnished her for his

further assistance, and made her capable of giving him further help, light, and directions, in his duty, and that he stood in the way of his own comforts all the while he was without her; nay, that he seemed to reject the instrument by which God had done him so much good, without inquiring whether God had designed her for his further benefit or no.

He reflected how suitable a disposition she was of in religious things to the design he had of keeping up a religious family, and how admirable a wife, a mother, a mistress, such a lady must needs be to him and his whole house, who now saw the truth of the excellent sentence she had often repeated to him, viz., That a religious life was the only heaven upon earth. He discoursed of all these things with his faithful counsellor, poor William, who pressed him by all the persuasions he could use to go and make her his own, for it was the only fear, William said, he had for him, that he would marry some lady, who, having been brought up in the usual levity of the times, would pull him backward, rather than forward him in his religious resolutions.

With these thoughts he resolved to go to London, and apply himself immediately to his former mistress, and obtain her for his own if possible; but was exceedingly disappointed when he found she and her father, and all the family, were gone to the Bath.

However, he waited, and hearing of their return, he went immediately to make his visit without any ceremony. When he found she was abroad, he fell to work seriously with her father; he told him, that the last time he was there, he had indeed promised to wait on her again, but had not yet done it, for which he was come now to ask her pardon, and to give her the reason of it, and hoped he would give him leave to see his daughter again, notwith-

standing what had passed. Her father told him, he had received an account how his daughter had used him; that he was in the country when it happened, otherwise he should have concerned himself to have secured him better treatment; that he had resented it so already to his daughter that he had scarce been on speaking terms with her since; that as to his promise of coming again, he believed she was convinced that she had no reason to expect it, seeing no gentleman would care to be ill used twice upon the same occasion. The young gentleman answered, that he was very sorry he should resent anything from his daughter on his account; that he was surprised to hear him say she had ill used him; that upon his word she had not done or said the least unbecoming thing to him; that he was even then, when she did it, fully convinced of the reasonableness of what she had said, and ten times as much, if that were possible, and also of the just motives she had to say it to him; that if she had done less, she would have acted from meaner principles than he knew she was mistress of, and that her reasons were so good, and she so well maintained them, that he had neither then, or now, the least thing to offer against them, and that his business was not now to answer her arguments, but to see if he could comply better with the just demands that she then made, than he could before.

The father answered with a great many compliments and excuses, and such-like discourses; but the gentleman found that he neither relished the reason of his daughter's refusal, or was affected at all with all he could say to convince him how he had taken it; and modesty forbidding him to go further in any declaration about religious matters, especially where he found there was no taste of it,

he declined saying any more about it, but he turned his discourse to desiring another interview with his daughter upon the terms of former proposals; which the father consenting to, they went together in the young gentleman's chariot to Hampstead, where the young ladies were; and this was the gentleman, who, as I observed, was come to the door with their father, just as they were, above, talking of him with their aunt.

I had given an account before, that they heard a coach stop at the gate, and that a servant brought up word that their father, and another gentleman, was below stairs; but they were surprised, you may be sure, when the eldest sister, going down first, comes running up stairs again with the news, in short, that it was Mr. ———, and that their father had brought him.

The aunt, unwilling her niece should appear in any disorder, says to her, Come, child, you two shall stay a little, and let me go down first; which the younger sister was very glad of. It was easy to perceive, and the passages already related will allow us to suppose, that although it was some surprise to the young lady to have him come thus suddenly and abruptly upon her, having not prepared her thoughts, or resolved upon what reception to give him, and not having the least intimation from her father upon what account he came, yet that she was not alarmed, as she used to be; the scruples of her conscience were all answered; her jealousies of his hypocrisy were over; and her affections had little or nothing to struggle with now, unless she might doubt his resentment of things past, and whether he came upon the old account, or rather to perform his promise, and make a visit of ceremony only. However, she begged her sister to speak to her aunt, that they

might stay at her house, and that she might receive his visits there, because then she would have her aunt to advise and consult with on every occasion, and then that she would put off their being left together that night, that she might consider things a little, and know the better how to receive him.

Her sister went down, and sending for her aunt into another room, proposed the first to her; Let me alone, niece, for that, says she. So the other went up to her sister, and soon after the father calling for his two daughters, they went down into the room. It was easy for her, at first sight, to perceive that her lover was not at all altered in his affection to her; that he did not come to her with resentment or with ceremony; for he flew to her, took her in his arms, and told her he came to see if she had goodness enough to pardon his not keeping his word with her, in coming to wait on her again, and also to claim her promise of staying for him. He spoke this so softly, as not to be heard by the company, and without expecting any answer, turned about to pay his respects to her aunt; in doing which, he told her, he hoped she would give him leave to wait upon her niece at her house.

The aunt took the hint, and turning to the father, Brother, says she to him privately, I think if you would let my niece stay here for some time, and let the gentleman come to wait on her here, I would take care to prevent such little scruples as you know interrupted that affair before, and you will the sooner bring it to an end, according to your mind. With all my heart, says the father; if we had done so before, I believe she had not played the fool as she did.

Upon this, turning themselves to the company, she says aloud, Niece, I don't intend to lose your company thus; I suppose, if this gentleman designs to

visit you, he won't think it a great way to come to Hampstead, which, now the roads are so good, is not above an hour's driving; and I hope we shall not make his entertainment so ill as to make him weary of coming hither. Her niece said, that must be as her father pleased to direct. I know that, said her aunt, and therefore I have got your father's consent already. They both bowed to her in token of assent, and night coming on, her father talked of going away; so he told her he would take another opportunity to wait on her; which was what she had desired. And thus ended their first meeting.

They had scarce dined the next day, but, as he had said, he came to visit her, and they had the whole afternoon to themselves; and from that day they began to understand one another so well, that, in a few weeks, matters began to draw to a close. But, because some part of their discourse is necessary to finish the former account, and may be as useful as it is entertaining, I shall first give some of the particulars, as they occurred in discourse between her and her aunt and sister, upon this occasion.

As she had advised with her sister and aunt upon every particular, and especially with her sister, from the first of it, so she made no scruple to give them a full account of things as they passed. It was one morning, after the gentleman had been above a week in his new addresses, that coming into her aunt's dressing-room, she found her sister there drinking coffee with her aunt, and her sister began with her thus:—

Eld. Sist. Well, sister, you used to be free with a body, and tell one now and then how things went with you; now we hear nothing from you. What, is it all to be a secret?

Aunt. Nay, niece, you ought not to press your sister to give an account of such things.

Eld. Sist. When she wanted advice, madam, she was open enough.

Aunt. For my part, I wish her as well as I do my own children; but I cannot desire her to give any account of such things, unless she wants advice in anything; and then she's a judge of that.

Yo. Sist. Indeed, madam, if I have not told anything, or everything, both to you and my sister, it has not been by way of reserve; I am ready to give you a full account of all you desire; for there is nothing passes between us that need be concealed from you that are so near to me. As for my sister, I told her every passage before; and as for you, madam, did I not desire to be here, that I might consult and advise with you, and have your directions in every step? and I have wondered you have never asked about it before.

Eld. Sist. The chief thing I want to know is, how you find him as to the grand affair of religion; and whether you think him a hypocrite or no.

Aunt. Ay, that's what I am curious about.

Yo. Sist. I am but an ill judge of sincerity, especially in a case where my inclinations, you know, are partial.

Eld. Sist. Why you were the nicest creature alive before, sister; and yet, you know, your affections were the same way then.

Aunt. Ay, niece, what can you say to that?

Yo. Sist. Madam, my sister takes it quite wrong.

Eld. Sist. How do I take you wrong, sister? did not you conclude him to be an atheist?

Yo. Sist. But I never said he was a hypocrite; if he had been no honester, than he was politic, I had been effectually deceived; for it was too true,

as he said, if he had talked a little religiously, nay, if he had not openly professed his contempt of all religion, he had cheated me, and I had never made any objection.

Aunt. That's true; you are right, cousin: but how stands it now? are all the stories you told me you heard at the Bath about him, true or no?

Yo. Sist. Truly, I believe they are.

Eld. Sist. Are you but at believe still? I would have had the bottom of them all out by this time: what have you been about all this while?

Yo. Sist. Truly we have spent all the time almost about the great difficulty of judging whether he is sincere or a hypocrite; and we are scarce got through it yet, I assure you.

Eld. Sist. Why then I think my sister is mad: what kind of confession of principles do you insist on, pray? I hope you don't set up to examine the heart.

Yo. Sist. You run all upon mistakes with me, sister; the dispute lies just the other way; I am for allowing him to be sincere, but he will not grant that I have any reason to do so: he says that I ought to believe he is a hypocrite.

Aunt. Come, niece, let us have the whole story of it; we shall then know how to judge of it together.

Yo. Sist. With all my heart, madam: you know he came to me last Tuesday night, when you first left us together. After some compliments, he repeated what he had said before, that he came to ask my pardon for not coming again, as he had said he would: I told him I did not expect him to come again; and if I was to believe the opinion of other people, I had used him so rudely, that it was not reasonable to think that any gentleman that was so treated, would ever have come again, unless it was to affront me. He wondered, he said, who could

pretend to say so; for, he assured me, he not only never said I used him ill, but never thought so, and certainly I would not say so to anybody; for he was persuaded, he said, that I did neither do it on purpose to use him ill, or believe it was ill usage. I told him he did me a great deal of justice to say I did not act on purpose to affront him; but that I could not but say I thought I had used him a little too rudely, for all that; and that if he thought so too, I was very ready to take this opportunity to ask him pardon, without so much as naming the necessity I was in, on other accounts, for doing what I did.

Aunt. You were very courtly in that particular, niece; pray what did he say to it?

Yo. Sist. He told me I had nothing to ask him pardon for; and assured me he had not been gone half an hour from me, before he was convinced of the justice of all I had said, and how much reason I had to refuse him, upon the nicety which I had refused him upon. He added, that he had a thousand times since reproached himself with the folly of his own conduct at that time, or that he could think it could recommend him to any woman of virtue and sense, to boast of having no thought or sense of religion: For, madam, says he, had you taken no notice of it, I should of necessity have concluded, in a quarter of an hour after, that you had no sense of virtue or religion yourself. Why, what if I had not? said I; I had been but the more suitable to you, and you must have liked me the better for that. He returned, No, madam, just the contrary; for, though I own I had not thought of religion myself, yet, had any woman told me so of herself, I should presently have said she was no match for a gentleman; for no man can be so void of sense, as well as of religion, as not to know that a woman of no religion is no woman fit to make a wife of: and this,

says he, convinced me that you were in the right to refuse me on that account.

Aunt. It was a very ingenuous acknowledgment, I confess; the truth of it is so convincing, that I wish all the young women who have their settlements in view, would reflect seriously on this point, that however wicked men are, they are always willing to have sober, religious, and virtuous wives; and 'tis very rarely that the worst rake in nature, if his senses are in exercise, desires to have a wife loose like himself, ——— but pray go on, niece.

Yo. Sist. He told me he was not gone a quarter of an hour from me, but this reflection struck with horror upon his mind: What a dreadful creature am I! sure I am a horrid, frightful wretch! that a woman of sobriety and religion was afraid to venture to take me, for fear of being ruined; and that she should think she declared war against Heaven, and joined herself to one of God's enemies! He was going on, but I found his speech stopped of a sudden, at which I was a little surprised, and asked him if he was not well: he said, Yes: and endeavoured to hide the little disorder he was in, and went on. He told me that I had been really very just to him, and he had reason to thank me for it; and that he had desired my sister to express his mind full on that account; which he hoped she had done. I told him I could not now enter upon an apology for what I had said to him so long ago; that if I had treated him rudely or severely, I was very sorry; but that what I did was occasioned, as he knew very well, by his making such open declarations, and such as I thought he really had no occasion for, concerning his aversion to, and ignorance of, all religion; and that it was really a dreadful thing to think of marrying on such terms. He replied, that if I had said less than I did, he must necessarily, when he came

to his senses, have had a meaner opinion of me than he had; and that it was really the reproaches I had given him, and the excellent reasons I had given him for my resolutions of rejecting him, that had now brought him back to me, and had made him resolve to have no woman on earth but me, if I would but revoke the resolutions I had taken against him: for nothing less than so much religion and virtue, could ever make him happy.

Aunt. If he was sincere in this, I assure you, niece, it was a high compliment upon religion, as well as upon your conduct.

Yo. Sist. I told him, that, as the reason I had for using him so, was thus approved by himself, he bound me to preserve the same resolution, on the hazard of his having the less esteem for me. He confessed that was very true, unless he could convince me the cause was removed, which he saw no hopes of; and that was the reason that he came to visit me again, with so little encouragement, that he knew not what to think of it.

Eld. Sist. What could he mean by that? why, sure, then all we have heard must be false, and he is the same man as ever.

Yo. Sist. I was greatly startled at his words, and looked steadily at him, but could judge nothing from his countenance: but it grew late, and he took his leave, falling into some other cursory talk, and left me, I confess, in the greatest confusion of thought imaginable; for I was dreadfully afraid he would declare himself to have no sense of religion on his mind still; and then I was in a worse condition than at first, having thus admitted a second treaty with him.

Aunt. I thought, child, you was a little perplexed on Tuesday night; but I took it to be only a little thoughtfulness more than ordinary, which is usual on such occasions.

Yo. Sist. When he came again the next night, he made a kind of an apology for having left me in more disorder than he was used to do; For, to tell you true, madam, says he, I was not able to go on with what I was saying to you; neither am I now, says he, seeing I am come to wait on you, and yet have effectually shut the door against myself. I told him I did not perhaps rightly understand him, unless he would explain himself. Why, says he, I have first told you sincerely how absolutely I approve the resolution you took against me, and yet owned, and do still, that I am no way able to convince you that the cause is removed. I told him that I thought he was not just to himself; and that the same thing, whatever it was, that had power to convince him that I was under a necessity to refuse him on that occasion, would certainly assist him to remove the cause. He turned short upon me: But, madam, said he, did I not make conditions with you, that whenever I talked of it you should take me for a hypocrite? and did I not positively declare to you that I would deceive you if I could.

Eld. Sist. Now I know what he meant.

Yo. Sist. Ay, so did I too; but he run it up so high against himself, that I could not answer a word, unless I would have turned the tables, as it were, against myself, and courted him, by telling him how well I was satisfied of his sincerity; so that, in short, I was quite puzzled: for what could I say to a man, that did, as it were, bid me believe him to be a hypocrite?

Aunt. You had a nice case before you, cousin; pray what said you to it?

Yo. Sist. I told him, very coldly, I was under a necessity of believing everything he said, because he had been so sincere with me all along; and I begged him, therefore, not to tell me seriously, now,

that he was a hypocrite, and that the cause of my refusing before to talk with him was not removed; that I hoped it was otherwise, but should despair of it if it came from his own mouth; and that if I was assured from his own mouth that he came to deceive me, he must needs know I had nothing else to do but to act as I did before, which he had owned I had reason for. No, madam, says he, I do not say I desire to deceive you; but I say that, having told you I would, you ought to believe I design it; and I see no room to convince you I am not an hycrite, seeing I promised you I would be so; and I know not whether I dare tell you that I am not so, even in the best of me.

Eld. Sist. I could have put an end to all this nicety in two words.

Yo. Sist. Then you will the more easily tell me how I shall do it.

Eld. Sist. Why, I would have told him that, though I had not so much concern for him to busy myself to inquire after his conduct, yet I had not so little as not to be glad to know, by other hands than his own, that he was no hypocrite, and that I rejoiced, for his sake, to hear that his eyes were opened to that which alone could make him the happiest man alive.

Yo. Sist. Then I must at the same time have told him that my scruples were all over about him; which was as much as to tell him I would have him whenever he pleased to take me: but I ha'n't learned that way of talking yet.

Aunt. Well, niece; and if you had, after so long acquaintance, and so much pressing, I do not think you could have charged yourself with being forward.

Yo. Sist. Well, then you will the better like what has happened since, madam.

Aunt. With all my heart: then pray go on, my dear.

Yo. Sist. Why, madam, this took up the first three or four nights of our discourse: the night before last he began a little more seriously, and came closer to the thing itself: he told me he had made himself very melancholy with me the two last times he was with me; for he thought that, instead of courting me to have him, he had taken a great deal of pains to court me to refuse him again. I told him I thought so too; and that I confessed I had been a little concerned about it, because I could by no means understand him. He told me it proceeded from the just reflection he made on his foolish discourse two years ago, viz., that he wished he had counterfeited religious discourse, and that he would certainly have cheated me if he could, and did not doubt but he could have done it effectually: those words, he said, flew in his face when he went to say anything seriously to me, and persuaded him that I would believe he was only counterfeiting serious things on purpose to deceive me. I answered, he might reproach himself with those things, but I did not lay any stress on them; for I believed he had too much honesty, whether it proceeded from religion or no, to offer to deceive me in a thing in which he owned so ingenuously I was right. Then he told me, with the greatest affection in his discourse that ever I saw in my life, that he must confess, as he said before, that my rejecting him as I had done had made impressions on his mind quite different from what he had before; but that he found it the hardest thing in the world to express what had happened to him on that account, and the thoughts of those things which had taken up his mind since that; only this he would own to me, that I was in the right, that he had most notoriously ex-

posed himself to me, and that he had perfectly the same opinion now of those things which I had before, viz., that a religious life was the only heaven upon earth; but he could go no further, he said, nor could he answer for himself how far such thoughts might carry him, or express to me the particulars that had lain upon his mind about them; and how far what he had said would satisfy me, he did not know. I told him I hoped he did not think I set up for a judge of the particulars; that my objection before lay against a general contempt of all religion; that it was my terror to think of marrying an enemy to God, one that had no sense of the common duties we all owe to Him that made us; but that I never expected a confession of faith from him, or any man, in such a case. He told me he thought it required more assurance than he was master of to talk anything of himself that way, at least till there were more intimacy between us; that he thought religious things, talked of in that manner, received an injury from the very discourse, and that it was next door to boasting of them, which was the worst kind of hypocrisy; and if he could say no more of himself but this, he hoped I would take it for a sufficient testimony of the alteration of his thoughts, viz., that he loved me for the honour I paid to religion, and for that steadiness which had made me refuse him before. I told him I saw his difficulty, and that I would abate him the trouble of entering into particulars, which I found he was too modest to relate, and which, however, I was not quite a stranger to; and that I desired we might speak no more of a thing which I knew it was difficult for him to be free in. He blushed as red as fire when I said I was not a stranger to the particulars, which he declined to express, and said not one word for a good while. I told him I knew it was a point

that could not come from a man's own mouth; that I did not desire it, and would make him easy, so far, as to tell him I was fully satisfied he was no hypocrite, and hoped he would give himself no more trouble about it. He took me in his arms, and told me very affectionately that I had said that of him that he would give all the world to be able to say of himself; that, however, he hoped to be beholden to me for more than that, and, as I had given him the first view of the beauty of a religious life, he expected a great deal more from my assistance and example in pursuing the steps of it. I told him that I begged of him we might avoid all religious compliments, for they were the oddest things in nature; that he quite mistook me; that it was not because I thought myself capable of guiding in religious matters, that I insisted on the necessity of not marrying a man void of religion, but from a due sense of just the contrary, viz., the want I should be in of being guided and assisted in religious things upon all occasions myself; that it would be a fatal mistake the other way, and greatly to my disadvantage, to have him expect more from me than he would find; and that, on the contrary, I thought I had now so much less religion than he, that he ought to refuse me now for the same reason that I refused him before.

This is the sum of our affair, and thus it stands, only with this addition, that he told me a very pleasant story which happened at a chocolate-house near the court, which is so useful, as well as diverting, that I cannot but relate it to you.

(*Here she tells them the story of the two beaus and the lord discoursing about the suitableness of a religious life to the life of a gentleman.*)

Aunt. That story is fit to be read for a lecture of

instruction to all the young gentlemen of this age. Well, niece, you are a happy girl.

Yo. Sist. Why, madam?

Aunt. Only in being courted by a gentleman of the greatest sincerity, modesty, and piety, that ever I met with in my life.

Yo. Sist. And would you advise me, madam, to have him then?

Aunt. Ay, child, without any more difficulty, if you desire to be the happiest woman alive, and an example and encouragement to all the young women in England, for the rejecting profane and irreligious husbands.

Thus far, I think, contains all the useful part of this story, only adding, that it was not long after this, both the agreement and settlement being all in a readiness, the father and all friends assenting, they were married, and lived afterwards the happiest couple that can be imagined; having a sober, regular, well-governed family; a most pleasant, comfortable, agreeable conversation with one another; suitable in temper, desires, delights; and, in a word, in everything else; and, which made them completely happy, they were exemplary in piety and virtue to all that knew them.

RELIGIOUS COURTSHIP.

PART II.

We have seen the happy conduct of the youngest of the three daughters of the gentleman, whose family this book began with, and the comfortable success of it: the second daughter, from the beginning, acted upon other principles, or rather, indeed, upon no principles at all; yet her history may, perhaps, be no less fruitful of instruction than the other, though something more tragical, as to her own part of it.

She declared to her sister, as appears in the beginning of her story, that she would not trouble herself, when it came to her turn, what religion the gentleman was of, or whether he had any religion or no, if she had but a good settlement; and now we shall see her be as good as her word.

Her father, whose character I have sufficiently spoken to already, having had, for many years, a considerable trade into Italy, where he once lived, there came an English gentleman to visit him, who had been formerly contemporary with him, and had long been his correspondent and factor there, viz., at Leghorn; and who, being grown very rich, was come to England, resolving to settle here. There were some accounts, it seems, depending between them, which they had appointed a day to settle and balance, in order to exchange releases; which

being all finished in the morning, the father of these ladies takes his factor into his coach, and carries him home to dinner with him, where the old gentleman entertained him very handsomely, and where he had an opportunity to see the two maiden daughters; for the youngest, who had been married some time, was gone into Hampshire to her country seat with her husband.

This Leghorn merchant no sooner saw and conversed a little with the ladies, but he took a fancy to the youngest, and from that time resolved to make her his wife. It was not long before he let them know his mind; and, having made very handsome proposals to her father, he, the father, received him with a frankness suitable to their long intimacy and acquaintance, and told him, with all his heart, if his daughter and he could agree.

Before I bring them together, it is proper, to the relish of the story, to take a little notice of the characters of the two young persons, of whose story we ought to have a general idea, that we may not be left to gather it up slowly among the particulars.

The young lady was very sober, virtuous to the nicest degree, extremely well-bred, and wonderfully good-humoured; she was likewise a very lovely, beautiful person, the handsomest of the three sisters, beyond all comparison: as to religion, she had a very good foundation of knowledge, and had done nothing to make it be supposed she was not truly religious in practice; but she was not altogether so grave and serious as her eldest sister; much less was she so devout and strict as her younger sister that was married, as might be observed from what passed between them at first: her temper was sprightly and gay; and, though she governed herself so, that she gave every one room to see that she was one that had a true sense of re-

ligion at bottom, and a fund of good principles and good notions in her mind, yet she was young and merry, and did not tie herself up so severely in such things as her sisters had done; which, though it was no part of her happiness in the affair before her, yet it rendered her very agreeable to her father; and particularly, it made the affair with this gentleman much easier to her father, and he had much less trouble with her than he had with her two sisters.

The gentleman was, as I have observed, an Italian merchant, a very handsome, agreeable person, perfectly well-bred, having lived abroad, and seen a great deal of the world: he was also a man of excellent parts and sense, talked admirably well, almost of everything that came in his way, spoke several languages, and, in short, was not a complete-bred merchant only, but much of a gentleman; and to all this was to be added, that he was very sober, grave, and oftentimes, as occasion offered, his discourse upon religious affairs discovered him to be very serious and religious. As to his estate, it was not very well only, but extraordinary; he was, indeed, a little too old, having lived abroad about twenty-two years, and was about so much above twenty, which was the age of the lady. However, as this was an advantage in many other ways, as in his judgment and experience in the world, the father made no scruple at all of it, nor did his daughter inquire much after it.

In a word, having been introduced to the young lady, she must have been a woman of much more nicety and scruple than she professed herself to be, if she had disliked anything in his person or circumstances; and therefore having kept her company for some weeks, things began to draw towards a close,

when one evening, after the gentleman had been with her, and was gone away, her eldest sister and she happened to meet; and the following dialogue between them may further explain the case.

DIALOGUE I.

Eld. Sist. Well, sister, how do you go on? When are we to go and buy wedding-clothes?

Sist. Nay, I don't know; e'en when you will, I think: I don't know what we stay for, not I.

Eld. Sist. Prythee let's have done with it then; I want to call him brother; then I can talk freely to him.

Sist. Why you may call him brother now, can't you? You see he calls you sister already, as naturally as if we were all of a breed.

Eld. Sist. Ay, so did somebody else, you know, and yet made a two-year's piece of work of it afterwards for all that.

(*She means the gentleman that courted the third sister.*)

Sist. Yes, yes, I remember it; but I'll assure you I am none of those; I'll either make an end of it one way, or make an end of it another way, in less than so many months.

Eld. Sist. Perhaps your objections are not so just as hers.

Sist. I don't enter into her scruples, I assure you.

Eld. Sist. I hope you have not her occasion.

Sist. Nay, I don't know what occasion she had, not I.

Eld. Sist. Nay, hold, sister; don't say so, neither; without doubt her occasion was very just; and you

have the same obligation upon you, but I hope you have not the same occasion.

Sist. I know not what you mean by obligation; I have no obligation at all upon me, as I know of.

Eld. Sist. Why do you say so, sister? I mean the obligation which is upon us all from the charge my mother gave us upon her death-bed, about our marrying religious husbands.

Sist. I look upon what my mother said to be good counsel, which we should give its due weight to; but I do not take it to be a command that binds me absolutely in duty to my mother's words: duty certainly ends, when death separates.

Eld. Sist. I know not whether it does or no, sister.

Sist. I think you are too superstitious that way, sister.

Eld. Sist. Well, but suppose it to be but as advice, yet it has a double force with it: first, as it came from a tender, dear, and most affectionate mother, who not only most passionately loved us, but had an excellent judgment to direct her to give us the best counsel: and, secondly, as our own judgment and conscience must testify with her, that what she enjoined us to observe, is the most reasonable and necessary thing for us to do, that can be imagined for our own advantage, and as well for our happiness here as hereafter.

Sist. You lay a greater stress upon it than I do, I confess: if my mother had been alive indeed, I should have thought myself obliged to be guided by her directions, and her injunctions would have been positive commands; but then she would have been able to judge of particular circumstances, and would have given her advice accordingly.

Eld. Sist. But her advice to us was therefore

suited to her present state of absence, and went no further than to a case described by its own circumstances, and which nothing can alter; because the obligation supposes the circumstance, and where the circumstance is not, the obligation ceases.

Sist. You talk so learnedly, I want an explanation.

Eld. Sist. No, sister, you don't want an explanation, I am sure; but you are disposed to lay it all aside, as a thing you have no need of; however, I'll explain myself in a word speaking: our mother warned us against marrying men of no religion, that is, men that made no profession of a reverence to God and his worship; this want of a religious profession is the circumstance which I speak of; if the circumstance does not appear, the advice ceases; for our mother knew we could not judge of sincerity.

Sist. Well; so then if a man tells me he is religious, it is well enough, whether he speaks truth or no.

Eld. Sist. What need we talk of this? I hope you have an assurance of the contrary in Mr. ——.

Sist. No, not I, indeed; what assurance can I have? He seems to be a sober man, that's all I know of it.

Eld. Sist. Well, and I would know more of it, however, if I were you.

Sist. Why I do know something more of it too, now I think of it; for we were talking of such things one night, when he happened to mention sir Robert ——, and he spoke of him with a great deal of indignation; he said he was a horrid atheistical wretch, and that he could not bear his company; for he was always making a jest of sacred things, bantering all religion in such a manner, that no sober mind could abide it without horror.

Eld. Sist. Well, there's something in that, I assure you.

Sist. Why I take it to be a plain declaration that he has a just reverence for religion, as my sister took the contrary in her lover for a declaration of his having no religion at all.

Eld. Sist. Nay, he told her he had not, in so many words, and that he had not troubled his head about it, and did not intend to do it.

Sist. Well then, and this gentleman has told me he has; for he owns he has so much regard for religion, that he cannot hear it ridiculed and bantered without horror.

Eld. Sist. That is something, I confess, in general: but —

Sist. But what? What would you have me do? Must I examine his principles and opinion? Shall I ask him to say his catechism? If I should talk on that fashion to him now, what kind of a catechetical wife will he think I shall make? He'll think I shall be a schoolmistress rather than a wife.

Eld. Sist. No, no; though you are so pert with your sister, forsooth, you need not be so with him, I hope; nor need I tell you how to manage such a point: but I warrant you I would find it out, what his opinion was, one way or another; why he may be a papist for aught you know yet of him; some of them are very religious in their way, and speak very reverently and seriously of religion in general.

Sist. Let him be a papist and he will. I am sure I can never ask him such a question; but, however, I am pretty well satisfied of that too; for I heard him say once, he had been at church: and another time accidentally speaking about religion, he declared he was a member of the church of England, as by law established.

Eld. Sist. Well, you are an easy lady; a little

matter satisfies you: I should presently have said, I hope, sir, you mean the protestant church of England: why do you not imagine the Roman catholics think the popish church is the only church of England that is established by law?

Sist. Sure, sister, you take all the world to be hypocrites and cheats; I never can suspect any gentleman, that bears the character of an honest man, would set up to impose upon me with such equivocal speeches; why I never heard such a vile distinction in my life.

Eld. Sist. Have you not? Why then I have: I have heard, that in king Charles the Second's time, people in general were deluded with that very expression in all their public speeches, proclamations, declarations, &c., promising always to preserve and maintain the church of England, as established by law; and yet all that while they meant the popish church.

Sist. These are remote things, sister; for my part, I have no mistrust; I am honest myself, and I suspect nobody.

Eld. Sist. It is a thing of moment, sister; I would be sure.

Sist. Not I; I have no room to suspect.

Eld. Sist. Then you do not answer the obligation you were under to my mother's desire.

Sist. Yes, I do; for I think I have good reason to believe him a very serious, religious gentleman.

Eld. Sist. But you know my mother engaged us to examine particulars, and not to marry any man, how religious soever he seemed also, unless he was of the same opinion in religion with ourselves.

Sist. In that I think my mother went too far, sister.

Eld. Sist. My mother gave us a great many examples of the misery that has followed in the rela-

tion of husband and wife, by reason only of differences in opinion.

Sist. It must be then where there was but little religion on either side.

Eld. Sist. I do not know that neither; you and I know some families, more than one or two, where they are all at daggers-drawn about opinion, and the families are ruined as to their peace, and yet both are very religious too, nay, zealous in their way: and the more the zeal, the more the strife.

Sist. There may be zeal, but there is no charity then: and what's any religion without charity?

Eld. Sist. Well, but because charity does not always keep pace with religion, and every one is apt to think themselves in the right, and to reproach the sincerity of those that differ from them; therefore our mother earnestly pressed us to make that point sure before we fixed our choice for our lives.

Sist. It is a fine thing to talk of, but hard to be followed: what have I to do with his opinion? and what can I say to him, if he tells me he is of one opinion, and should be of another? You, nor no young body alive, can prevent being imposed upon, if a man finds it for his purpose to deceive us.

Eld. Sist. Well, sister, you trample upon all caution; you are one of them that seem perfectly indifferent whether you are deceived or no.

Sist. No, sister, I am not willing to be deceived, you see; I have had a general discovery of his being a man religiously inclined, that has a reverence for the worship of God, and the being of God; nay, you cannot but remember how the other night at supper he discoursed very gravely, and I assure you, to me it was very agreeable, about the men of the town first pretending to be atheists, and to deny the being of a God, and the next minute profanely swearing by his name.

Eld. Sist. All this is true, and clears you from the first scruple; so far, I may grant, you are within my mother's first injunction, not to marry a man that does not profess to be religious in general; but that is but one part: what say you to the other, not to marry any man, however professing himself to be religious, that is not of the same opinion with yourself?

Sist. You will carry everything up to the extremity; but, however, I have a way for that too; and you shall not charge me with slighting my mother's advice.

Eld. Sist. What way have you got? I doubt 'tis but an odd one.

Sist. Why, if he will not be of my opinion, I'll be of his opinion; and so we will agree one way, if we can't t'other.

Eld. Sist. That's boldly said, and, I must own to you, signifies, you are yet to choose in your own opinion: pray, what if he should be a Roman catholic, as I hinted before? you know he has lived in Italy.

Sist. Well, if he should be a Christian catholic, I am a catholic Christian: so we need not fall out for all that.

Eld. Sist. I persuade myself you are not so indifferent as you make yourself, or else (which I hope rather) you are jesting with me, or you talk this upon a supposition that you are sure he is a protestant.

Sist. Well, you are in the right there too; I cannot entertain such thoughts of him; besides, my father told me he was a protestant.

Eld. Sist. It is our misfortune, sister, that my father does not much concern himself about those things; he leaves us to our fate.

Sist. And is that our misfortune, say you? I do

not see it, I confess; for I think 'tis our business to choose for ourselves: and I observe, where fathers are so very strait-laced, and confine their children to such and such particulars in the husbands or wives they shall choose, their children generally choose without much regard to those injunctions, or else fly directly in the face of them, and go quite contrary.

Eld. Sist. You argue, sister, from the practice to the duty, as if, because children do not regard the care and concern of their parents in their marriages, therefore they ought to do so; and that it was not the duty of parents to direct them, or to concern themselves about it.

Sist. I don't inquire what is the duty of parents; I am speaking of what is the practice of children.

Eld. Sist. But you do not justify that practice, I hope?

Sist. I think, take one time with another, children do as well, when they trust to their own directions, I mean when they choose with judgment: pray what would become of us, if we were just to follow our father's directions? You know he would direct us to take the first that comes, if he liked but the settlement.

Eld. Sist. That's a wrong way of arguing, sister, that, because our father neglects it, therefore children are not the better for such parents as do their duty, and that show a just concern for the religious happiness of their children, in settling them in the world.

Sist. I do not see much difference, I say; but sometimes one do as well as the other.

Eld. Sist. Yes, there is this difference, sister, that where the parents act right, the children are seldom ruined, unless it be by their own wilful obstinacy.

Sist. And sometimes children are ruined, let the

parents do their best; nay, sometimes the parents themselves know not what to direct.

Eld. Sist. You may as well say, that, because doctors die, nobody should take physic.

Sist. Every one has eyes to choose for themselves; I don't think the proverb has any weight in this case, that love is blind; folks may easily see the difference between a religious man and an atheist, without their parents.

Eld. Sist. But it is a matter of such weight, and so irrecoverable when done, that we ought to see with as many eyes as we can; and a careful, religious parent, is a good scout to look out for us, a good pilot to steer us, and a good counsellor to advise us.

Sist. I don't see the want of it, perhaps, so much as you do; I see, sometimes, the very mistake of the parents is the cause of the ruin of the children.

Eld. Sist. I must confess I do see the want of it and I think it is a sad thing to be left so as we are without the guide of our parents, for all that; and if we, in particular, should be ruined by it, our father would have small satisfaction in his own conduct: 'tis such management makes children slight their father's directions as they do.

Sist. Well, our father does kind things for us another way, however.

Eld. Sist. I don't desire to reflect upon my father; but if his care was as much employed in choosing religious husbands for us, (since he will have us marry,) as it is in getting portions for us, we should find the advantage of it much more to his future satisfaction, and our own.

Sist. We must take the more care of it ourselves.

Eld. Sist. Why, that's the point I am upon: I

wish you would do so then, sister; for it is your case that I am upon.

Sist. I have done it, I think: I see no room to object.

Eld. Sist. I can say no more, sister; you are resolved, I see, and must go on; but you will buy your experience at a terrible price; and if, upon the trial, you should be mistaken, you will think of this discourse hereafter.

Sist. What would you have me do?

Eld. Sist. Do! I would enter into a serious discourse of religious matters with him; I would know how we were to live together, whether as heathens or as Christians; I would find out his principles, if he has any, or find out that he has none: this is not catechising him, nor is there anything indecent in it. You are not ashamed to inquire into his estate, and make provision for yourself out of it by a good jointure; and will you be ashamed to inquire after that which is of ten thousand times the consequence? sure you can never go on hoodwinked at all hazards thus, in that part that is for the happiness of your life, soul and body; besides, had you not our sister's example before you?

Sist. Why, I tell you, it is clear to me that he is a man that has a sense of religion upon his mind; I gave you an instance of it in his detestation of sir Robert and his practices: if my sister could have had but so much satisfaction as that, she would never have refused my brother.

Eld. Sist. You wrong my sister, I assure you; she did not come so far, indeed, because she came to a clear discovery that he had no religion at all, which was the first point; but I can assure you, if she had got over that point she would have inquired further: for 'tis a poor satisfaction that is founded upon negative religion only.

Sist. If we expect to search into positives, as the world goes now, I think we put a hardship upon ourselves that we are not obliged to.

Eld. Sist. But certainly it is our business to do it, if we expect to live happily; for there are a great many men, now-a-days, that are not atheists, and that abhor bantering of religion, or making a jest of sacred things, and yet have nothing at all in them that is fit to be called religion.

Sist. Well, I am not to examine the inside: a small deal of hypocrisy will conceal the heart; if he be not a religious man, the worst will be his own, I cannot find it out.

Eld. Sist. Dear sister, I should not say so much, but that methinks you do not attempt to find it out; you do not inquire after it; I do not find you have exchanged six words upon the subject.

Sist. Why, I tell you, what he said about sir Robert ——— gave me a good impression of him.

Eld. Sist. O sister! you are soon satisfied; you would not be so easy in the matter of his estate; it seems you will trust your soul upon lighter security than you will your portion.

Sist. How do you mean?

Eld. Sist. Why, sister, you won't take it upon his word that he has an estate, or that you shall be provided for, but you must have his estate appear, your part be settled, and the land bound to you; it is not enough for him to say, I have such and such a revenue by the year, and you shall have such a part of it if I die before you; but you will have it under hand and seal, so that he shall not be able to go back.

Sist. Well, and should I not do so?

Eld. Sist. Yes, yes; but I allude only to it, and observe how less anxious you are, how much easier satisfied, how sooner secure, about the main article

that constitutes the happiness of your life and of your family, if ever you have one, than about your estate.

Sist. You run this matter up to a strange height, sister, as if all my felicity consisted in this one question, whether my husband be a religious man or no? nay, as if it consisted in his being of the same opinion in religion as I am of: as if I could not be religious though my husband was not so; or, in a word, as if I could not go to heaven without my husband.

Eld. Sist. No, sister; it is you that run it too high: I do not say you cannot go to heaven without your husband, or you cannot be religious without your husband; but I do say you cannot go comfortably through the journey thither without him, or he without you. A woman is to be a helpmate, and a man is to be the same: now a husband will be a sorry help to a wife, if he is not a help in the religious part of her life; and a sorry help, indeed, in the religious part, if he has no sense of it himself.

Sist. But I tell you he has a sense of it, and an affection to it.

Eld. Sist. Well, but it will hold in the other part of the question too: suppose he has; yet if his sense of religion is not the same with, or agreeable to, your sense of it, if he thinks you are going the wrong way, and you think he is going the wrong way, one pulls this way, and the other pulls that way, in religion; what will this come to in the family, sister? have you considered that?

Sist. Yes, yes, I have considered it very well.

Eld. Sist. I doubt it, sister; I doubt you have only considered of it so as to resolve not to consider of it.

Sist. I have considered it so far as to see that

I can do nothing in it any further; I cannot enter into a debate about principles; tell him what my opinion is, and ask him what his opinion is, and try beforehand whether they agree or no; I tell you I don't think 'tis my business, any more than the talking to him of our settlement; that's the father's part to do: sure my father won't bring an heathen to me!

Eld. Sist. It is true, and that's our misery, that, as I said before, we have not a father to concern himself in that part for us; but I do not think it is such an improper thing for you to do. Sure, I could some way or other bring it in, that I would make some guess at him: why you have never offered at it in the least, neither has he shown you anything of it; I do not so much as find that he has ever gone to church with us since he has appeared here so publicly.

Sist. Why no, that's true; and I wondered he did not, indeed, especially last Sunday, when he dined with us; but he made an excuse that I thought was sufficient.

Eld. Sist. Well; and would not I have laughed at him at night, and asked him if ever he used to go to church? or whether he went to church that Sunday, or no?

Sist. Why so I did; and he told me he was obliged to go that day to wait upon the marquis de Monteleon, the Spanish ambassador.

Eld. Sist. The Spanish ambassador! why then he was obliged to go to the popish chapel with him too; for the ambassador never fails at that time of day. I'll lay an hundred pounds he went to mass with him: there's a clue for you, find out that now, and your business is done.

Sist. Dear sister, you are strangely possessed with Mr. ———'s being a papist; have you any

particular notion of it? you perfectly fright me about it.

Eld. Sist. No, indeed, I must confess I have not the least ground for it; I won't do him so much injustice; but if I were in your case, I would be satisfied about it; I would ask him downright in so many words.

Sist. I would not ask him such a question for an hundred pounds.

Eld. Sist. And I would not marry him, without asking him, for ten thousand.

Sist. Why if I should, and he were really a papist, do you think he would be such a fool to tell me?

Eld. Sist. Perhaps he may be so honest as not to deny what he is not ashamed of.

Sist. I should hate him the moment he confessed it, not for being a papist, but for showing he had so little concern for me, as to venture to own it.

Eld. Sist. So that you think he ought rather to deny his religion, and disown his principles, than venture your displeasure?

Sist. I should think he was very indifferent, whether I was displeased or no, or that he presumed upon my being so engaged to him that I could not go off; either of which I should take for an unsufferable insolence.

Eld. Sist. So you would have him conceal his principles, and discover them when you could not help yourself; pray which would be the greater insult?

Sist. You strive to push me into a strait, but I have a medium again that delivers me from the necessity on either side, and that is, to shake off the suspicion; and seeing you have no real ground for it, I cannot see why I should terrify myself with a mere jealousy.

Eld. Sist. I own I have no ground to suppose him a papist; but I would never marry any man in the world without knowing what his principles are; 'tis no satisfaction to me, to say he's not an atheist, he is not a profane despiser of religion. Negatives are a poor foundation, sister, to go upon in a case of such consequence; if he is of any religion he should tell it me, or I would have nothing to say to him.

Sist. Why, I told you, he said in particular, that he was of the Church of England, as by law established.

Eld. Sist. Why first, dear sister, I told you that's nothing but what any papist may say, even without a dispensation; but, however, it seems he did not say that, but in a way of discourse to other people; he did not say so seriously, in answer to any inquiry of yours, or to give you satisfaction.

Sist. No, that's true; I have not desired any satisfaction of him; for I take those casual, occasional discoveries of himself. to have more of nature in them, and to be less liable to suspicion, than a formal, studied answer, to a jealous or doubting question; and I have many reasons for my opinion too.

Eld. Sist. Why that may be true; but I cannot think that such occasional, cursory speeches, can have solid foundation enough to satisfy you in a thing of such moment; and I think I have the testimony of the fathers of our Reformation on my side, who, without doubt, saw in it the great weight that lies on this part, viz., of the advantage and necessity that there is, that husband and wife should be of the same opinion in religion one with another; when they appointed, with the office of matrimony, that the communion be given to the married couple at every wedding; that it might appear

not only that they both made a profession of the Christian religion, but that they both agreed in the profession of the same principles, and joined together in the same communion with the reformed protestant churches, and with one another. And I think this is enough to convince you of the justice of our mother's injunctions, that we should not marry any man, how religious soever he was, unless he was of the same opinion in religion with ourselves; or, as I observed above, that, as was the custom, the man and the wife might communicate together.

Sist. I take that to be done principally to prevent protestants marrying with papists, and to discover the fraud, if there was any; you see that practice is left off now.

Eld. Sist. I know it is left off, since other and lesser differences among protestants have made mutual communion more difficult; but I think the reason of the thing remains, viz., that every couple should know what communion they are of, and should be always, if possible, sincere without constraint, of the same communion with one another.

Sist. I rather think 'tis left off because it is not thought to be of so much moment as they thought it of then.

Eld. Sist. That is, then, because religion itself is less in fashion than it used to be, which, indeed, is too true; also marriages are now wholly taken up with mirth and gay things; but in those days matrimony seems to have been understood, as it really is in itself, a solemn and serious thing; not to be ventured on rashly, considered of slightly, or performed with levity and looseness: 'tis a transaction of the greatest weight, attended with circumstances

of the greatest importance, and consequences of the utmost concern to our welfare or misery. The happiness of life, the prosperity of families, and, indeed, the interest of the soul, is exceedingly dependent upon the good or bad conduct of both parties in this great affair; and to run headlong upon it, is rightly compared to a horse rushing into the battle, and argues a miserable thoughtlessness of what is before us.

Sist. Dear sister, you terrify me with talking thus. What is it you would have me do?

Eld. Sist. I would have you take some measures, such as opportunity will not fail, in your conversation with this gentleman, to present you with, that you may know not only negatively that he is no hater and despiser of God and religion, but positively what his principles in religion are; you may go as far further as you see room for it, but less than this you can never be satisfied with; and can never answer it to God, to yourself, your mother's dying injunctions, nor to your children, if you should have any, to venture upon marrying him without it.

Sist. If Mr. ——— heard your discourse, he would think you were very much his enemy.

Eld. Sist. If he was in his senses, he would think me very much his friend.

Sist. No, no, quite the contrary, I assure you.

Eld. Sist. Pray, my dear, let me ask you one question; for I must own to you this is one of my great suspicions; Has he inquired nothing after your religion, the profession you make, or the opinion you are of? Has he asked you no question about that neither?

Sist. No, not a word; he knows better; he knows I should give him but a short answer, if he should

ask me anything about my religion. What do you think I'll be catechised already? No, no: it is not come to that neither.

Eld. Sist. This is one of the strongest grounds of suspicion to me, and assures me that he has very little regard to religion in general; that he can pretend to marry you, and know nothing whether you are a heathen or a Christian, an atheist or religious person, a papist or a protestant; the man can have no great value for religion that is so little concerned whether his wife has any or no; for I take the thing to weigh as much on one side as on the other, where there is any serious consideration at bottom.

Sist. Indeed we have had no discourse about it.

Eld. Sist. It seems you are pretty well agreed; that is to say, that neither of you trouble your heads about it: I must confess, I think it will be a dreadful match.

Sist. Why so? I tell you I have a way to prevent all the mischief you fear, and that is, as I told you before, I am resolved we will agree; for if he is not of my opinion, I will be of his opinion, and so we will never have any strife.

Eld. Sist. But suppose you cannot do this; for I take all that for loose talk: for example, suppose he should be a papist.

Sist. I won't so much as suppose such a thing: I wonder you can suggest it of him.

Eld. Sist. You seem to be very much in the fashion of our city ladies, sister; I am sorry for it.

Sist. What fashion's that, sister?

Eld. Sist. Why, of reserving their choice of principles, till they see what principles their husbands shall be of.

Sist. And is it not a very obliging custom, sister,

in young ladies; I think the gentlemen owe them a great deal for so much complaisance.

Eld. Sist. There seems to be something of forecast in it, I confess, viz., that they may be in a posture to take anything that offers; but there is nothing of serious religion in it.

Sist. Well, there is a great deal of good humour in it; and it takes off the occasions of religious disputes afterward, which I take to be the worst kind of family breaches.

Eld. Sist. But is not a concurrence of principles beforehand a much better way, especially considering that the inquiry is made during a state of distance, and while there is power of preventing the mischiefs of being unequally yoked?

Sist. Well, I am persuaded there never was such a thing done, except by my stiff, formal sister: Did ever a young gentleman, when he came to court his mistress, examine her, to know her principles, and ask her what religion she was of? Or did ever young lady, when she was courted by any gentleman, set up to catechise him upon the articles of his creed, except, as I say, my surly sister?

Eld. Sist. Let me answer that question with a question, sister: Did ever a young lady, that had any regard to religion, and the future happiness of her life, suffer herself to be courted two months by a strange person coming out of Italy, from the very bowels of superstition, and the very kingdom of popery, and go on with him even to drawing of writings, and never know what religion he was of, or whether he had any religion or no; except that she had heard by accident that he was not an atheist?

Sist. Well, I must take him for better and for worse, you know; I'll make the best of him I can.

Eld. Sist. I am very sorry that I can't prevail with you to prevent your own misfortunes, when it is so easy to be done.

Sist. You propose what I cannot so much as mention to him; I tell you it would be the rudest thing; I'm sure if he should do so to me, I should spit in his face, and bid him go and look for one that was religious enough for him; sure, never any such thing was done in the world!

Eld. Sist. I wonder you can talk so, sister! Do you not remember the passages about Mr. ———, when he courted my cousin ———? Did he not enter into a most serious, pretty discourse with her, about religion, when we were all at table with them? And don't you remember we all said, ay and you too, sister, when you heard it, that he did it with so much modesty, and so handsomely, that nothing could be more becoming? And did not you, as well as I, call her a thousand fools for pretending to be disgusted at it.

Sist. But she took ill his public manner of doing it, which I think was wrong too.

Eld. Sist. But I find you don't know or don't remember the rest of the story; she exposed herself to the last degree by resenting it: the case was this: the gentleman had courted her some weeks, and liked her, nay, loved her very well, but was greatly perplexed to find out what taste of religion his mistress had; he was loath to fall point-blank upon her with the question, just as you say, in your case, yet he was not willing to be satisfied with a second-hand relation neither; but one day when we were all together at my cousin's, the young gentleman supped there, and after supper her mother and he and I entering into a discourse together of several matters, at last we began to talk of religion, and particularly of religious matches,

when we were agreeably surprised to hear him talk for near half an hour wholly upon that subject; you were not there just when he talked of it, but we all gave you an account of it.

Sist. I was not there; I supped at London that night, and came to you the next day, I suppose.

Eld. Sist. You did so; but it would have pleased you to have heard him talk; he began with the meaning and nature of religion, how it consisted chiefly in natural duties, the effects of the knowledge and acknowledgment of a God governing the world, to whom we owed the homage of our lives, and of all we enjoyed, and must account for the use or abuse of them: then he observed how pleasant and agreeable a religious life was, how it was religion alone that made life happy, families pleasant, society agreeable, and relations comfortable; how miserably some families were brought up for want of it; how beautiful it was to see an unity between relations in matters of that nature, and how dreadful the strife was in families where it was otherwise.

Sist. Where was she all the while?

Eld. Sist. She sat just by him, and he held her by the hand all the while: he went on then to tell us a great many pleasant stories of families that he had known: how in some the husband was religious, and the wife atheistic and profane; and in others the wife was religious, and the husband rakish, loose, and profligate; and how miserable the one made the life of the other. Then he gave himself a loose to talk of the constant, never-failing felicity of families where there was a harmony in religious things between husband and wife; and then to try her, I suppose, or perhaps to prevent her thinking he pointed his discourse at her, he turned to her, and smiling, My dear, says he, if there be

any defect, on that account, between you and I, 'twill be on my side; but I hope to be helped forward by you.

Sist. That was a kind of a wheedle, rather than a serious turn in his talk; and I suppose she took it so.

Eld. Sist. No, she took it otherwise, I assure you; for he might easily see she was not pleased: however, he went on, and told us a long story of a couple that were married, and were both very religious, and yet, said he, they never had any happiness, any agreement, or any practical religion in the family: this put me upon inquiry into the circumstances of it; Why madam, says he, one was of one opinion in religion, and one was of another; both of them were tenacious of their own opinion, and censorious of the other: one went to one place to worship, and one to another: one prayed to God in one part of the house, and one in another. Why, says I, they prayed to the same God I hope; sure charity might have taught them to have prayed together! So far from that, madam, says he, that they not only never prayed with one another, but I believe they scarce ever prayed for one another, in their lives, but looked upon one another as heathens and publicans, and such as God himself would not hear.

This was a sad family, sir, said I; but I hope there are very few such in this nation, where religion is so heartily espoused. Truly, madam, says he, it may teach us what occasion there is for us to seek out for religious wives, and to take care to be agreeable husbands to them, when we have them: and here he said a great many handsome things indeed, of the little concern men generally took upon themselves either to marry religious wives, or to see

that the opinions of those they married were not too much shocking with their own; and especially that when men had religious wives, or women had religious husbands, they did not study, as much as lay in them, on both sides, to bring their opinions to agree with one another, bearing with one another, yielding as much as possible to one another, and the like; that, as the Scripture said, *their prayers might not be hindered.*

Sist. Well, and was this the discourse that she did not like?

Eld. Sist. I am sure her mother and I liked it; but she behaved herself so simply about it the next day, that gave him a surfeit of her religion, and he declined her afterwards upon that very account: for as he told me since very seriously, she discovered such a temper at that time, such a general dislike of a religious life, and of a regular family, that made him particularly afraid of her.

Sist. Ay, ay, he should have gone, if he was so nice; I should have liked his discourse no better than she did.

Eld. Sist. How can you say so, sister, when you cannot but remember how you did like it when you heard of it?

Sist. I should have thought it was too public though, and that it was a kind of forcing me to a necessity of giving an account of my opinions, whether I would or no.

Eld. Sist. Well, what you would have done I know not; but I think no woman in her senses could have disliked such principles as he went upon; it plainly showed her that he was a man that placed the principal felicity of his life upon having a religious wife, a religious conversation in his family, and a religious government of it as it increased.

Sist. What was that to the purpose? she would have had him without it, and he might have talked of it afterwards.

Eld. Sist. Yes, yes, she would have had him without it, that was her folly: but he was resolved he would not have her without it, and that was his wisdom; and there was an absolute necessity for him to try beforehand what he had to expect.

Sist. Well, I would not have been tried by him; he should e'en have gone, I say, and taken a fool for his own finishing, where he could have found her.

Eld. Sist. Well, and he did go; and you know he married afterwards a very sensible, sober and relious woman, and they are a very happy family as any I know; whereas our foolish cousin, you see, has married a rake; a fellow of no religion, and is as miserable almost as it is possible for a woman that has a good estate to be made in this world.

Sist. Well, sister, and how do you bring this story down to my case? I hope I am not going to marry a rake, as she has done; if I thought it was so, I would soon clear myself.

Eld. Sist. No, no, sister, I do not say so; but there are many kinds of husbands to make a sober woman miserable, besides rakes, that I assure you; nor was it upon that account I told you the story.

Sist. What about differing in opinions you mean? I must confess, I think, sister, you are too nice in that case, and run it up, I say, too high: I can give many instances where such matches do very well.

Eld. Sist. Pretty well, you should have said; and I know where you are agoing to name a family; I suppose you mean our cousin Martha ———, and our friend James ———; one a strict churchwoman, and the other a quaker.

Sist. Well, suppose I did mean those; they live very comfortably, and love one another very well.

Eld. Sist. I am glad you have named them, because I would argue from the best example you can give: I allow they live as well as 'tis possible for two of so wide and irreconcileable principles to do, and it is owing to a world of good humour, affection, and charity, in both of them; but if you think there is not something wanting between them, which ought to be between a man and his wife, something essential to what we call happiness, something they would give half their estate to have, and the want of which robs them of the sweetest part of relation, and of the best and most solid comfort of a married life; or if you think that they are not both sensible of it, you are greatly mistaken.

Sist. I do not converse much with them, not I; but I know they are a very loving couple, and everybody takes notice of it, and admires them for it.

Eld. Sist. Before I go on where I was speaking, let me take notice to you that your very last words now are an argument on my side; it is true, they are admired for their kind and pleasant way of living one with another; and why is it! but because it is so seldom, so rare, so wonderful indeed, to find two of different opinions agree so well, that all people wonder at these two: and shall any young woman, that values her peace, and lays any stress upon the happiness of an agreement with her husband, venture upon such a circumstance, in which it must needs be next to a miracle, if she has any such happiness?

Sist. You don't know but there may be many more such.

Eld. Sist. Well, but I'll keep to your own example, and I will convince you, sister, that, even in these two, who are happy to a miracle, yet there is an exception to their felicity; and, though they love entirely, and that love covers a multitude of things,

yet, I say, they find something wanting, which other people have, and something that they would be glad to have; and I have had frequent occasions, in serious discourse with her, to hear her speak her mind freely to me, in this very case; particularly I will give you one example of it, viz., one Sunday morning, when I went to church with her; O! said she to me, cousin, if I could but get this dear Jemmy of mine to go to church with me! Well, says I, what then? What then! says she; why, then I should be the happiest woman upon earth: methinks 'tis the melancholiest thing, continued she, to go alone to the worship of God, and the man that I love, and is to me as my own soul, won't worship with me; and it breaks my heart; it quite takes away all the comfort of my life. A while after this, as we walked along the street to go to church, she fetched a deep sigh: What's the matter with you, said I, cousin? The matter, cousin! says she, look there you'll see what's the matter: there's Mrs. ———, with her husband and all her children, going hand in hand to serve God together: they live a heavenly life; while we, tho' we love one another better than they do a great deal, yet live like two strangers on the Sabbath-day, whatever we do all the rest of the week. Now what think you of all their apparent affection to one another, sister? will that make up the loss?

Sist. They live very comfortably, for all that: and their love makes up all those intervals in their satisfaction.

Eld. Sist. Well, I'll tell you how comfortably they live; I assure you, though they are patterns to the whole world, for extraordinary affection, and their love is so uninterrupted, that it does make up abundance of other things, yet here, I say, it makes up no

intervals, I can assure you of it; nay, I think verily, that affection, which it is confessed they have one for another, and for which they are both so admired, makes it the worse; at least, it makes it the more grievous to bear; and the part I am telling you will prove it; pray let me go on with it: I came back with her and dined; and after dinner, honest James takes up his gloves and his cane, and came and kissed her, and prepares to go to the quaker's meeting. She could hold no longer then, but burst out into tears; he was extremely anxious to know what ailed her, but she could not speak; she was unwilling to grieve him, and unwilling to say anything that was unkind; he pressed her a long time, and said a thousand tender, kind things, that I hardly expected from him; but that made her cry the more. At last, I said to him smiling, I know what troubles her but you won't relieve her: Won't I, said he, a little moved, why dost thou say so? I would let out my blood to do her any good; and she knows that I will stick at nothing to do for her. Why, says I, you won't serve God with her. Won't I, said he, yes I would with all my heart, if she would let me. This, I found, laid a foundation for some dispute about their principles, but she wisely avoided that, and I perceived it, so I put it off: I dare say, says I, she would give all she has in the world you would but go to church with her now. At that she burst out, though full of tears. Ay, says she, I would give him back my jointure with all my heart. He took her in his arms, and with all the tenderest and kindest expressions that he was capable of, endeavoured to pacify her, and put an end to it, as a thing they could not dispute of without unkindness, and therefore better to be avoided: but it took up the whole afternoon to restore them one to another,

and she neither went to the church, nor he to the meeting, and yet here was nothing but kindness and affection between them all this while.

Sist. I never heard anything of this before.

Eld. Sist. But I have heard a great deal more from her, and from him too; though she loves him to an extremity, and, to give him his due, he merits all her affection, yet as she is a very sober, religious woman, she is ready to break her heart to think sometimes what a life she lives, she can scarce ever talk to me of anything else; I having been something more intimate with her on these occasions than ordinary.

Sist. What has she to complain of? Has she not a kind husband? And does he not give her all the liberty and freedom in the world? Does she not go as fine, and dress as well as she pleases? Does he not keep her a coach, and give her leave to give her own liveries, and go where, and do what she will? Does she not live like a queen? What can she complain of?

Eld. Sist. Her case, in a word, sister, is the very case our dear mother warned us of; and it is not hard to tell you what she has to complain of; she is a very sober, religious woman, that serves God night and day, with a sincerity and devotion not easy to be found among women, as the world goes now, and I'll tell you what grieves her, and what she complains of: her husband is as religious too, in his way, as she is in hers; but as there is no harmony or concurrence in their several principles and ways of worship, so there can be no public, stated, family worship. He does not join with her, nor she cannot join with them; so all the thing called family religion, the glory of a married state, and the comfort of family society, is entirely lost; the servants are left ungoverned, the children unguided; and

there again is her grief doubled, she has four little children. It is true he is a man of too good a humour to deny or restrain her in the education of her children; but it is a sad thing to her to be obliged to instruct and caution her children against the practice of their father, whose life ought to be their pattern, and his practice their example. O sister! if ever you come to look into such a condition with a feeling sense of it, as your own, you will find it is not all the tenderness of the most affectionate husband in the world can make up the loss of these things. On the other hand, he has his dissatisfaction too; he is as sad on the account of her difference from him, as she is for his difference from her; so that, in short, the unhappiness is mutual.

Sist. They should have considered and prevented these things beforehand.

Eld. Sist. That's true, sister; and that's the reason of all my discourse to you; that's my proposal to you, and the reason why I press you so much to come to a certainty in these things. You will have sad reflections hereafter, when 'tis past remedy.

Sist. I am not so nice in the point; I told you my remedy for it; if he can't come up to me, I can come up to him; I am sure he is no quaker.

Eld. Sist. I hear you, sister; you make light of it now. I believe he is no quaker, but he may be worse; and you are not sure he will equal that quaker in goodness of humour, kindness, and affection, the want of which, I must tell you, will make the want of the other be so much the worse to bear.

Sist. Well, I must run the venture of it, I think; 'tis gone too far to break off now.

Eld. Sist. I have not been persuading you to break it off, sister, you mistake me; I am only

arguing, or rather persuading you to inform yourself of things, and know beforehand what you are going to do, that you may not run into misery blindfold, and make your marriage be, as old Hobbes said of his death, a leap in the dark.

Sist. I think all marriages are a leap in the dark in one respect or another.

Eld. Sist. Well, sister, if it be so, it should not be so in matters of religion in whatever other case it is so; that should be clear, whatever is doubtful; that should be examined into, and perfectly discovered, whatever is omitted: the mistakes in this are fatal to both sides, and often irretrievable, and the consequences dismal.

Sist. It is all a hazard, and that amongst the rest.

Eld. Sist. No, no, sister; I am firm in my opinions; you and I have often argued it when you seemed to be of my mind. It is true there is a hazard in every part of the change of life; we risk our peace, our affection, our liberty, our fortunes, but we ought never to risk our religion.

Sist. Why I am not running the risk of my own religion, though I do not know his.

Eld. Sist. Yes, truly, in some measure, sister, you do, and your own words acknowledged it just now. Did you not say, that if he would not be of your opinion, you would be of his? And is it not often that we see young women change their opinions, nay, change the very principles of their religion, in compliance with their husbands?

Sist. Well, and is it not very well to do so?

Eld. Sist. If their principles were ill-founded before, they do well to change them, to be sure; but is it not oftener that they rather abandon principle, than exchange it; lose their religion, than increase it? For you cannot suggest, that all the women who have changed their opinions, in compliance

with their husbands, were wrong before, and have changed for the better.

Sist. It is better so far, that it takes away the foundation of family breaches, which you speak of.

Eld. Sist. But it is a sad exchange if it be wrong; for the woman then exchanges the peace of her conscience for peace with her husband; loses her religion, and gives up her principles instead of exchanging them for better.

Sist. There may be some compliance sure, without entirely abandoning principle; you propose no medium between right and wrong.

Eld. Sist. Why, take our cousin we were speaking of, or her husband the quaker, let them stand for the example. Suppose she, in compliance with him, (for you know she has affection enough to do any possible thing to oblige him,) should turn quaker, would she not retain a sting in her soul that would destroy all her inward peace?

Sist. I don't know what to say to that. Quakers are Christians, I hope.

Eld. Sist. I won't enter into that; I'll allow them to be Christians too; but take it of him, as well as of her; suppose him to change then, and come over to her, then it would be the same in him; which is all one to the case in hand. Pray, where is the felicity of such a match, where one or other is supposed to act without conscience, or against conscience, all their days, for conjugal peace, and to sacrifice principle to affection? Are not these still invincible arguments for what I am persuading to?

Sist. I scarce know what you are persuading to, not I.

Eld. Sist. Yes, you do, sister, very well; however, I'll repeat it as often as you say so. I am urging the necessity of young people comparing

their religious principles and opinions before marriage; and seeing that they agree, at least so far as to lay no foundation of a religious breach in the family after marriage; that they may worship God together, join in family precepts, and support family religion; that they may agree in their instructions to their children, and join in setting them examples; that there may be no disputings or dividings against one another, but a mutual harmony in the propagating their own eternal interests, and that they may go hand in hand the true way to heaven.

Sist. And cannot this happen to them without a settlement of circumstances beforehand, that we must capitulate about religion as we do about jointures, and settle principles as we do fortunes, always beforehand?

Eld. Sist. That it may not or cannot happen so, I will not say; but if you will take the world at large, as it is now stated, between those that have no religion at all, and those who differ from others, you must allow, sister, it is a lottery of a thousand blanks to one prize; and who that values their own peace would venture the odds?

Sist. I believe I shall venture, for all that.

Eld. Sist. Then either you have no principle now, sister, or it is ten to one but you give it up when you are married.

Sist. Perhaps you may be mistaken in both.

Eld. Sist. If I am, there is a third, which I was going to add, but restrained it in respect to you, in which I believe I shall not be mistaken.

Sist. Let us have it, however.

Eld. Sist. If you will have it then, it is this: that (to repeat the former) either, as I said, you have no principle now, or will give up your principles

when you are married, or will be very miserable in a continual family strife to maintain them.

Sist. It must all be ventured, sister; I see no remedy now: there's no going back at this time of day.

After this discourse, the eldest sister, seeing her resolute, gave it over, and the young lady was as good as her word; for she put it all to the venture, as will appear in the following dialogue.

The end of the first dialogue.

DIALOGUE II.

The young lady mentioned in the foregoing dialogue is now to be viewed in another station of life: she was not altogether so thoughtless of her circumstance, or so unconcerned as she seemed to be by her discourse to her sister, about what was before her, but she had not the conduct or resolution of her sisters to carry her through: however, she did take one step sufficient to leave a sad example of a father perfectly unconcerned about the religious settlement of his children, and making the good of their souls no part of his care.

It was but a few days after the discourse which she had held with her sister, that her father and she had the following dialogue one evening, after the gentleman who courted her was gone away: her father, being in a parlour all alone, called her to him, and began with her thus:—

Fa. Well, child, I suppose your ceremonies begin

to be pretty well over now; when are we to bring this business to a conclusion?

Da. I am in no haste, sir.

Fa. Well, but Mr. ——— is in haste; you may be sure he would be willing to have the inconveniences of coming and going thus late be over; and as long as both sides are satisfied, why should we keep him in suspense?

Da. I do not keep him in suspense, sir.

Fa. Well then, if you are agreed, let us put an end to it, my dear, and tell me what day you will be married, and I'll make the appointment.

Da. Agreed, sir! I have agreed to nothing, it is all between him and you.

Fa. How do you mean, child? he has now waited on you these six or seven weeks: I hope you know one another's minds before now.

Da. We have spent six or seven weeks, indeed, in his visits, talking and rattling of things in general, but I am not much the wiser for it.

Fa. Why you are a little better acquainted, I hope, than you were at first, child: do you like the gentleman, or have you anything to object?

Da. Sir, I don't trouble myself much with objections; I leave it all to you, sir; I resolve to do as you will have me to do: I won't do as my sister did.

Fa. Well, you are in the right there; but I hope there is no occasion, neither: this gentleman is a man of sobriety, and of a good character.

Da. I hope, sir, you have informed yourself fully of that; for I leave it all to you, sir; and about his religion too.

Fa. I have known him a great many years, child: he is a very honest, good sort of a gentleman, I assure you.

Da. I hope you have good grounds to be satis-

fied, sir; for I depend upon you, sir, for everything: I know you would not propose him to me if he was not a very sober, good man.

Fa. I am thoroughly satisfied of that, my dear.

Da. And of his being a religious person, sir? you know what my mother obliged us to on her death-bed: I hope, sir, you have a good account of his being a sober, religious man? I leave all to you, sir.

Fa. Yes, yes, my dear, he is a very religious, good man, for aught I know, I assure you.

Da. He is a protestant, sir, is he not?

Fa. A protestant, child! yes, yes, he was always a protestant all the while I traded with him: I have had an account of it from several people. A protestant! yes, yes, you may be sure he is a protestant; I dare say he is.

Da. Well, sir, if you are satisfied, I have no more to say.

Fa. Nay, child, why dost thou put it so all upon me? I believe he is a good man, and religious enough: I didn't bring him up, nor I ha'n't asked him how religious he is; I do not enter into these things with folks; every one's religion is to himself.

Da. Well, sir, if you are satisfied, I must be satisfied, to be sure.

Fa. Nay, I would have you be satisfied too, child; can't you ask him what religion he is of?

(*Here the father seemed a little unwilling to have it all lie upon him.*)

Da. I can't ask him such a question, not I; besides, sir, if you are satisfied, I shall look no further.

Fa. I know not what occasion there is to be so scrupulous; you see what ridiculous work your sister made of it, and yet married the same man two years after.

Da. Sir, I don't make any scruples, not I, if you are satisfied; I shall do as you would have me: I don't suppose you would have me have him, if he wan't a very sober man.

(*She has nothing in her but the same dull story of doing everything her father would have her do.*)

Fa. I tell thee, child, I dare say he is a very sober, good man, and will make a very kind husband; I can say no more to thee.

Da. All I desire to know is, that he is a protestant; I hope you are sure of that, sir.

Fa. Dear child, what makes thee talk so?

Da. He has lived a long while in Italy, sir, where, they say, they are all papists.

Fa. Why, so did I, child, when I was a young man, but never turned papist: I dare say Mr. —— is a protestant; I never heard any one suspect him before.

It may be seen by this dull and empty discourse on both sides, that this poor young lady went on *tanquam boves*, like the ox to the slaughter; not knowing, or not considering, that it was for her life: she resolved all her scruples into that weak way of answering, 'I leave it all to you, sir; I hope you are satisfied, sir; and I'll do as you would have me, sir,' and the like; not considering that she had a father that laid no stress upon anything but the money; his whole care was for the settlement and the estate, not inquiring into the principles of the person; and therefore his answers are as silly for a father as hers were for a wife, viz., that he dare say the gentleman was a very sober, good man, that he had known him a long time, and did not question but he was a protestant, and the like. In a word, the girl left it all to her father; and the father, perfectly indifferent as to matters of religion, left it out of his

inquiry. And thus they were married in a few weeks after; and abundance of mirth and jollity they had, which covered all the appearances of other things for a great while.

At length, the lady went home to her house in the city, which was magnificently furnished: among other rich furniture, the rooms were exceedingly stored with a noble collection of very fine paintings, done by the best masters in Italy; the part of Italy where this gentleman had lived, viz., the duke of Tuscany's country, being particularly eminent for choice pictures. It happened, after she had been some time at home, had settled her house, and had finished the decorations of her rooms, that her husband bringing some very fine pictures home, which were newly arrived from Italy, has, among others, three very choice pieces hung up in their bedchamber; whereof one being a picture of the Crucifixion, extremely valuable and fine, he contrived to have hanged up by the bed-side.

His wife, not used to such things, perfectly ignorant of the design, not at all acquainted with the use made of them in popish countries, took no manner of notice of it at first, taking it to be only brought in there, as it was a most noble piece of painting; and that her husband thought it was the best thing he could grace her chamber with. It happened her two sisters came together some time after, as is usual, to see her house, and to see the fine collection of paintings, which they had been told so much of: and after some time, their sister and their new brother led them through all the apartments, which were indeed extremely fine: the brother-in-law, as what he took great delight in, made it his business to tell them the design of the several pictures, what places or fine houses such and such represented, what stories and what faces

others were drawn for, and the like; and being his wife's sisters, he treated them with all the freedom and kindness imaginable.

When they came to the Crucifixion, which hung by the bed-side, he told them there was one of the finest pieces of painting in England; told them the name of the painter that had drawn it, who, he said, was one of the best masters in Italy; and I'll assure you, sister, says he, this is counted a fine thing in Italy.

But why must it hang in your bedchamber, brother? says the other married sister, not suspecting anything; for her eldest sister had not told her anything of what she had said to her sister. O madam, says he, they always have these things in their bedchambers in Italy, on a religious account. Well, says the sister, but as we do not make use of them that way, methinks they are better anywhere else. Why sister, says he, our bedchambers are places where we are, or ought to be most serious. Why, says she again, but we that are protestants do not make a religious use of them. Not so much perhaps, says he, as the Romans do; but I cannot say but they may be useful to assist devotion. Not at all, says the sister. At least, madam, says he, they can be no disadvantage to us; we want all possible helps in our adorations. We have the promise of the Spirit of God to assist us, says the sister, very warmly, and need no idolatrous pictures. He saw she was tart, and seemed to be forward to dispute, which he avoided; so he called them to look on another picture, and that passed off the discourse.

After they had gone through several apartments, and had admired the fine paintings, as indeed they well deserved, they came to his closet; he would have avoided going in, and told them it was in con-

fusion, and not worth their seeing; but his wife having told them it was her husband's closet, they would not be denied: when they went in, they were surprised with the most charming pictures that their eyes had ever beheld, with abundance of rarities, which their brother, being very curious, had picked up in his travels; and in a little room on one side of his closet, upon a table covered with a carpet of the finest work they had ever seen, stood a pix or repository of the host, all of gold, and above them an altar-piece of most exquisite painting: he was indeed jealous of being betrayed by these things, but there being none but the ladies, who had never seen such things before, and knew nothing by the form, they retired without so much as discovering what it was; and as for his wife, she was so perfectly ignorant, that she was easily imposed upon.

They passed from this place to the other side of the closet, where were abundance of very fine pieces; but here the eldest sister could not forbear observing that all the pictures on that whole side of the room were religious pieces, and, though still without much suspicion, she said to him, I observe, brother, you gentlemen that have lived in Italy, are so in love with popish customs, that you are always full of these church paintings; here's nothing but representations of Christ and the Virgin Mary, in one shape or another, in every room in your house: she went on jestingly for some time, till she came to the upper end of the room, to a picture which hung just over an easy chair, and which had a curtain drawn over it; he thought she would not have let her curiosity outrun her good manners, and so did not apprehend her opening it; but she made no scruple of offering to fling back the curtain; but soon found it would not run back, being, as she

found afterwards, to draw up in festoons with pulleys: however, she discovered by what she had done, that the picture was the same with that in the bedchamber, viz., a large crucifix, or picture of the Crucifixion.

She said no more, but hastened to view what was further to be seen, yet so as that it was easy to discover she was in no little disorder. Her sister that came with her, discovered it first, and asked what ailed her. Then the new-married sister, whose house she was in, came to her with the same question; she owned to them she was not very well, and that presently gave her an excuse to withdraw into the woman's apartment, where she had some room to recollect herself: however, she took care not to give the least cause to suspect what ailed her, till she got an opportunity, when nobody was in the room with her but her youngest sister, (she who was first married,) and then she burst out into tears, and taking her sister about the neck, with the greatest passion imaginable; O my dear sister, says she, this poor child is utterly undone. Undone! says her sister, what do you mean? I think she is nobly married. O sister! I tell you she is undone; the man's a papist! Somebody came into the room just as she had said this, so that her sister had no time to ask her any further; and she, to prevent it, added, I'll tell you more by and by; so they passed it over.

You may be sure it was, after this, a very uneasy hour the two sisters spent in the ceremonies of their visit, both longing earnestly to be at liberty to talk together, one to disburden her mind, which was oppressed with what she had formerly suspected, and now found confirmed; and the other to hear the particulars of what she was so surprised at.

It was not long before they got away, and as soon

as ever they were in the coach, the married sister said, Dear sister, you have so surprised me with what you told me just now, that I thought every minute an hour till I got away, that I might talk about it; I entreat you what makes you talk as you do?

Eld. Sist. O sister! I am too well satisfied of it; I am sure 'tis so: I suspected it all along, before they were married, but now I am convinced of it; I am as sure of it as if I had seen him at high mass.

(*Here she tells her what she had observed upon his pictures and crucifixes.*)

Married Sist. Now you surprise me again; you say you suspected it all along.

Eld. Sist. Indeed I did; though I own I know no reason why I did so.

Mar. Sist. But why did you not warn her of it? she ought to have known of it; certainly she would never have married him if she had known it: that was very unkind not to warn her of it.

Eld. Sist. I did very plainly tell her my suspicions; but as I had no ground to fasten it upon him, it made very little impression upon her, nor could I really say it was so.

Mar. Sist. Well, I would have pressed her to a solemn inquiry into it; you might have prevented her ruin, if you had done it in time; now she is undone indeed, if it be as you say, and there is no room to prevent it.

Eld. Sist. You cannot think I had so little concern for her, as not to tell her my suspicions and to use all the arguments I was capable of, to persuade and prevail with her to inquire into his principles; for I know too well what the dwelling twenty years in Italy might do.

(*Here she recites to her the particulars of the*

whole dialogue foregoing, between her and her younger sister.)

Mar. Sist. Poor child! she is ruined indeed; she has leaped headlong into it, in spite of good advice, and her ruin is of her own procuring: But what will you do now, sister? Will you let her know it?

Eld. Sist. No no; I won't be the messenger of her sorrows, she'll find it out soon enough; the thing will discover itself too soon.

Mar. Sist. Dear sister, what does my father say to it? Does he know it?

Eld. Sist. You know, sister, my father gives himself very little trouble about such things; I dare say he never inquired into it, or concerned himself about it.

Mar. Sist. Does he know anything of it now?

Eld. Sist. Truly, I do not know; but I know that after I had pressed her so earnestly about it she did mention it to my father once at a distance in their discourse, as that she did not question but he was a good, sober man, or else he (her father) would not have recommended him; and added, I hope he is a protestant, sir?

Mar. Sist. Well, what said my father to that part?

Eld. Sist. He answered after the same slight way as those who make the main part none of their care: Yes, yes, child; a protestant! I dare say he is; he was always a protestant when I was in Italy with him, and everybody knows he is a protestant; and you need not question that, I dare say.

Mar. Sist. Poor child! she had no sincere concern upon her about it; if she had, she would not have been put off in a matter of so much moment,

with a bare supposition, taking it for granted; or I dare say 'tis so, without inquiring into it.

Eld. Sist. It is too true; she has not made it much her concern, and I am so much the more afraid for her now.

Mar. Sist. Afraid for her, say you! What are you afraid of her turning papist?

Eld. Sist. Why yes, I am: you know I told you what an answer she gave me to that very point several times, viz., that if he would not be of her opinion, she would be of his; that if he was a Christian catholic, she was a catholic Christian, and they would have no strife about that, and the like; and yet that is not all my concern neither.

Mar. Sist. What is it then?

Eld. Sist. Why I fear more the insinuations and subtlety of his tongue, his unwearied solicitation, the powerful motives of a man perfectly master of the art of persuasion; and that the more sweetness he has in his temper, (for he is really of a most engaging disposition,) the more influence his words will have on her, to win her over to error, not merely in complaisance to him as her husband, but by her not being able to answer his reasonings.

Mar. Sist. I confess, 'tis hard to resist the force of those persuasions, the reasons for which we cannot rid our hands of by argument: and one is apt to think one ought to comply with what we cannot confute; otherwise the papists will tell us we are protestants we know not why; a Jew may tell us we are Christians, we know not why; and an atheist may tell us we are religious, we know not why, and so on.

Eld. Sist. And that which is worse, there is no breaking the thing to her; to talk to her of it, is to anticipate her misfortunes: perhaps he designs to

conceal it from her for good and all, and at least it may be a great while before she discovers it; and all that time she will be happy in not thinking herself so miserable as she is.

Mar. Sist. I allow you, it is not fit to mention it to her first; and yet I am afraid, if she finds it out, she will endeavour to conceal it from us.

Eld. Sist. I doubt so; and by that means we are perfectly deprived of all opportunity of assisting her, or endeavouring to fortify her against the insinuations of any to turn her to popery.

Mar. Sist. But I think we should break it to my father.

Eld. Sist. I know not what to say to that; I am afraid his indifference in the thing should be a means to discover it to her, and bring some inconvenience or other with it.

Mar. Sist. I do not see any danger of that: but I think 'tis fit he should know it on many accounts.

Eld. Sist. I acknowledge I think he should know it, if it were possible to engage him not to disclose it; but, unless it can be done so, I would not have any hand in telling it him, upon any account whatever.

While they were in this dilemma, and doubtful what to do in it, as to telling their father, they were delivered from it by their father himself, as will appear in the following discourse. As soon as they came home, their father began with them; for he was more impatient to open his mind to them, than they were on the other hand doubtful about consulting with him upon this unhappy case: both sides being therefore willing to talk of it, they could not want an opportunity; and the father, after supper, began it with his new-married daughter, thus:

Fa. Well, Betty, you have been to visit your sister in her new house, I find: how do you like things?

Mar. Sist. Sir, she is nobly married, to be sure, she has a house like a palace.

Eld. Sist. I think there is the finest paintings that ever I saw in my life: he has laid out vast sums sure in pictures.

Fa. He always had the finest collection of paintings of any merchant in Leghorn: he is a great lover of art, and has a nice judgment, which are the two only things that can make buying so many pictures rational; for his pieces are so well chosen, that he may sell them when he pleases for above a thousand pounds more than they cost.

Eld. Sist. I like his fancy to pictures very well; but methinks I don't admire his having so many crucifixes and church-pieces among them.

Fa. It is the custom in Italy, child; all people have them.

Eld. Sist. That is, because they make a religious use of them: but I think protestants should not be so fond of them, who make no such use of them: it looks so like popery, that if the mind was not furnished against them, it seems to give a life that way; and then I observe he hangs them all just as they do: his crucifixes and passion-pictures hang all by the bed-side; his altar-pieces just at the upper end of the room, or on the east side; I cannot imagine why protestants, if they will have the pictures, should hang them in the same places, and mimic the catholics in the appearances, as long as they do not make the same use of them.

This discourse touched their father to the heart, and, as he said afterwards, he could hardly forbear tears; but he held it in a little longer, and replied

that it was only the custom of the country, and they might think no harm in it; and so being willing to put by the discourse, he turns again to his married daughter thus:—

Fa. Well, but child, how do you like your new brother? for you never saw him before, or at least, never to converse with him.

Mar. Sist. He is a very fine gentleman, sir; I was going to wish you joy, sir, and to say I was very glad to see my sister so well married, but something prevented me.

(*Now the father could contain himself no longer.*)

Fa. I know not what prevented you, but I believe it was the same that forces me to tell you both I have no joy in it at all: your sister is undone.

Mar. Sist. Undone, sir! what do you mean? what can be the matter?

Fa. She is undone indeed, child; and more than that, I have undone her: the man's a papist.

(*The father burst out into tears as soon as he had spoken the words, and the daughters stood as they were speechless for some time, looking at one another; at last the married daughter spoke.*)

Mar. Sist. Are you sure of it, sir?

Fa. Ay, ay, I am too sure of it: I have lived in Italy, and know something of the manner of such things; I presently discovered it.

Eld. Sist. Will you please to tell us how you discovered it? for we have the same thoughts, but we durst not speak our minds about it.

Fa. Child, it is impossible for any one that has lived in Italy not to discover it, as soon as he sees his house.

Eld. Sist. What, from the crucifixes and church pictures I spoke of?

Fa. No, no, child: but was you in his closet?

Eld. Sist. Yes, sir.

Fa. And was you in an inner room that you went to through his closet, and through another room beyond it?

Eld. Sist. Yes, sir; we were both there, but we saw nothing more than ordinary; only still more church pieces, as that of the Passion, the Salutation, the Ascension, and the like.

Fa. It is because you have not been used to such things, child: why it is his oratory; it is a little consecrated chapel, and there stands an altar, and an altar-piece over it, with a crucifix, and the Ascension painted above that; on either side there are fine rich paintings, one of the Baptism, and another of the assembly at the feast of Pentecost, and the Holy Ghost descending in flaming tongues, and the like: but that is not all, for upon the altar is a pix of pure gold, covered with a piece of crimson velvet, which is the repository, as they call it, of the host.

Eld. Sist. I wonder, sir, he would let you see these things, if he designed to conceal his profession.

Fa. It was all by accident; for when I was in his closet, he was called hastily down, and his wife let me into these two rooms. But, alas! she knows nothing of the meaning of them, she only takes them to be fine Italian rarities.

Eld. Sist. Indeed I do not wonder at that, for I understood them no more than she does: and yet, my sister knows, I presently entertained the same opinion of his religion as you do now, but it was from a picture of the Crucifixion that hung by his bed-side, with a curtain over it.

Fa. Well, child, yours are suspicions, mine is a certainty: when I charged him with it, he could not deny it, but seemed surprised when he found I had been in his chapel.

Mar. Sist. Nay, it is then out of doubt, it seems, if he owns it; but what will become of my sister? now she will have reason to see how just my mother's injunctions were to us all; I fear she will reproach herself with the neglect of them.

Fa. My dear, she must reproach me with it; 'tis I have ruined her; I have given her up.

Mar. Sist. No, sir, I think it lay upon her to have inquired into his principles in religion before she had given herself out of her own power.

Fa. My dear, she came to me, and questioned with me upon this very point: she asked me if he was a protestant, and I encouraged her, told her he was a protestant, and a very sober, good man.

Mar. Sist. I suppose, sir, you did not say positively that you were sure he was a protestant, but that you believed so.

Fa. I assured her so much of its being my opinion, that I told her she need not fear it; and she again left it all to me, and depended upon me, and it is I that have betrayed and deluded her: in short, I have sold my child, and the peace of her life, for the toys and fine things of Italy: I have undone her; it is all owing to my being unconcerned for the better part.

Eld. Sist. Dear father, do not take the weight of it so much upon yourself: my sister knows it was her duty to have made a further search into it, and I pressed her to it in time, and with all possible importunity.

Fa. Child, you did right; and I believe she designed to follow your directions: But what assistance did I give her! how did I damp that resolution, when I stopped her mouth by telling her that I dared to say he was a protestant! She trusted to my assurance; nay, she told me that she did so.

(*Here the father repeats to her the discourse be-*

tween him and his daughter, mentioned at the beginning of this dialogue, continuing to reproach himself with betraying his child.)

Eld. Sist. But, sir, notwithstanding all this discourse, (for she told me every word, from time to time,) I urged her a great many times, and told her my thoughts; for I suspected him from the beginning; and I laboured to convince her that she ought to see with her own eyes, and to talk plainly and openly to him of it.

Fa. Did she not tell you that her father had assured her he was a protestant, and that she trusted to that?

Eld. Sist. She was more just to you, sir, than to say that you assured her of it; but she repeated your very words, that you said you believed it, and dare say he was; and I told her plainly, that it was evident from your words that you only spoke your opinion, and that she ought not therefore to call that a positive assurance to be depended upon: indeed, sir, I was very plain with her; she has nobody to blame but herself, I told her.

(*Here she repeats all her former discourse with her sister.*)

Fa. She has herself, indeed, been to blame for want of reflection upon your seasonable persuasions, my dear, and you acted a faithful part to her: but had I been as faithful to her, who was obliged in duty to have done it, and on whom she depended, as you were, who had no obligation but from your affections, I had delivered my child from ruin.

Eld. Sist. I cannot say, sir, you had delivered her; she seemed resolved to have him: her eyes were dazzled with the gay things she expected, and unless you had positively refused your consent, I fear religion had not hold enough on her thoughts to have balanced her love of vanity.

Fa. But I have been perfectly careless of it, and have not done the duty of my place; I ought to have inquired into the circumstances of the person myself, and have restrained her.

Eld. Sist. I am sorry for her, but I think you reflect on yourself too severely, sir; to be sure you did not know that he was a papist, neither had you any suspicion of it; but she had; for I put the suspicion into her head, and earnestly pressed her to satisfy herself about it from himself.

Fa. My dear, I have been always too careless in these things: I remember the case of your sister here, and cannot but reflect how, when in a passion I told her it was none of my business, my own heart struck me with reproach; for I knew it was my duty; I wish this poor child had been as strict and as nice in that matter as her sister was; though I took it ill then, I see now she was in the right of it.

Eld. Sist. You afflict yourself, sir, for a case that issued well; and where, if you were in the wrong, there was no bad consequences: whereas in this case, where the bad consequences have happened, you were no way the cause, 'tis all her own doing.

Fa. But as it is an affliction to me, and that you may be sure it is, Providence seems to show me my sin, by my punishment; I acknowledge I was in the wrong before, and it is not owing to my prudence or concern that your sister was not ruined: besides, every father that has a due concern for the souls of his children, will certainly inquire narrowly into the principles as well as morals of the persons they match them to.

In a word, their father afflicted himself so much and so long upon this matter, that his two daughters were obliged to drop their concern for their sister, and apply all the skill they had to comfort their

father: he was so overwhelmed with it, that it threw him into a deep melancholy, and that into a fit of sickness, which, though he recovered, yet he did not in a long time thoroughly enjoy himself; always charging and reproaching himself with having ruined his child, having regarded nothing but the outside of things, and referring all their happiness to a plentiful fortune, and gay and extravagant way of living.

This went on some time: the eldest daughter, who was left with the father, managed things so prudently, that no notice was taken of these things in the family, and her father readily agreed with both his daughters, that it was by no means proper to let their sister know what they had discovered; concluding, that whenever she discovered it herself, she would come home with a sad heart, and make her complaint to them fast enough.

But they were all mistaken in their sister; for though she discovered the thing, and lived a melancholy life with her husband upon that occasion, yet in eight years that she lived with him, she never complained, or made her sorrows known to any of her relations; but carried it with an even, steady temper, and bore all her griefs in her own breast: as shall be seen at large in the next dialogue.

The end of the second dialogue.

DIALOGUE III.

The new married couple, of whom we had been speaking, lived in all the splendour and greatness that the highest degree of private persons admits of, and which a family possessed of an immense wealth,

could be supposed to do: he was not only very rich when he married, as might be supposed by the noble furniture of his house, and his very valuable collection of pictures and rarities, and the like, of which mention has been made, but as he fell privately into a great affair of remitting money by way of England to Genoa, for supply of the French armies in Italy, he got that way a prodigious sum of money; and yet acting only by correspondents at Amsterdam, he was liable to no resentment or objections from the government here.

After he had lived thus about eight years, and in that time had six children by this young lady, he died; she had four of her children living: but their father, after having in vain tried all the persuasions, arguments, and entreaties, (for he was too good a husband, and too much a gentleman to use any other method,) to bring his wife over to the Roman church, left her, however, under this terrible affliction, that having disposed of his vast estate in a very honourable manner, as well to her as to her children, yet he took the education of her children from her, leaving them to the tuition of guardians, to bring them up in the Roman religion. Nor was this the effect of his unkindness to her; for except in disputes about these things, they never had any difference worth the name of a dispute in their lives; and at his death he left at her own disposal above six times the fortune she brought him; but this of his children was a mere point of conscience to him, which he could not dispense with. This was an inexpressible grief to her, and that such and so heavy, as it is impossible to represent in this narrow tract, so as to say how far it afflicted her, or what ill consequences attended it; the drift and design of this work also lying quite another way, viz., to show the manner of life which naturally attends the best

matches, where the religious principles of the husband and wife are not the same.

The eldest sister was now married also, and married very happily and comfortably; the principles as well as practices of her husband not only concurred entirely with her own, but answered in a most agreeable manner to the character which was given to her father of him, viz., that he was a person truly religious.

The father, now grown old, had been a true penitent for his mistakes in the past conduct of his children, and had fully made up his want of care in his middle daughter's match, by his difficulty in being pleased for his eldest; she needed no concern for, or to show any nicety in, examining into the person, for her father was so very nice for her, that scarce anything could please him; he rejected several good offers, merely on account of religious principles, and put them off without so much as naming them to his daughter, till at last fixing upon a merchant in the city, who, both for sobriety, piety, opinion in religion, and estate, suited every way both his own desires and his daughter's judgment, the match, under such circumstances, was soon made. The uninterrupted felicity this young lady enjoyed, in having the best husband, the best Christian, and the best tempered man in the world, all in one, made her the happiest woman alive; and indeed recommended the caution she always used in her choice, by its success.

Her father lived with this daughter, when he was in town, but otherwise in Oxfordshire, with his own sister, the lady ———, widow of sir James ———, of whom mention is made in the first part of this work: he lived very easy, having thus seen his family all settled; for his two sons were very well fixed abroad, the one at Leghorn, and the other at

Cadiz; and he might really be said to have no affliction in the world but that of his middle daughter, who, though by far the richest and most prosperous in circumstances, and lived in the most splendour of all the rest, yet he esteemed really miserable; and so indeed in one sense she was.

He was at dinner one day at his eldest daughter's house, his youngest daughter being casually there also, when, while they were at table, letters came from the Bath, where his middle daughter was gone with her husband, to acquaint them that her husband, after an indisposition of no more than five days, was dead. It surprised them all, for he had not so much as heard that he was ill; and his distemper being a pleurisy, it was exceedingly violent, and carried him off very quickly. When their father read the letter, he was extremely surprised, and rising up from the table hastily, Poor child! says he, God has delivered her, but it is by a sad stroke. His daughters got up from table terribly frighted, when they saw the disorder their father was in, not knowing what the matter was; but he perceiving it, turned about suddenly, and said, Your sister ——— is a widow; and threw down the letter. At this they sat down again all surprised, and indeed sensibly afflicted; for, excepting his religion, which was not all that while made public, he was a most obliging relation to them all.

I purposely pass over here the incidents that may be supposed to happen in the family on so sad an occasion, (such as the lady's coming up from the Bath, the concern of the father and sisters to comfort her, the disposal of herself, and the management of her affairs,) hastening to the main story, viz., the account she gave of her life past, and of what she had gone through in the eight years of her

married state, upon the particular occasion of her husband's being of a different religion.

It was some months after her husband's death, and when all her affairs were in a settled posture, that she went to divert her thoughts a little, and unbend her mind from the sorrows she had been under, (for she was a sincere mourner for her husband;) I say, it was some months after his death, that her younger sister having invited her down to her seat in Hampshire, she went thither, and her father and eldest sister, at her request, went all with her.

Here, upon casual discoursing of things past, her father, who was almost ever bemoaning his neglect in exposing his children, threw out some words which first gave her to understand that both he and her sisters knew her husband was not a protestant, at which she seemed very much surprised; but as she found it was known, and that, however, it was still so far a secret, as that it had gone no further than their own breasts, she was soon made easy; she then made a confidence of it, earnestly entreating them that it might go no further, which they willingly promised for her satisfaction.

But this opened the door for variety of conferences among them, as particularly her sisters told her how they discovered it first, and afterwards their father; and repeated all the discourses they had had about it, and how and for what reason they had resolved never to mention it to her, unless she spoke first of it; concluding, that perhaps he might conceal it from her, and they would be very loath to discover a thing to her which they knew had no other consequence at that time, but to ruin and afflict her. Alas, sister! says she, I discovered it within a fortnight after I came home.

Ay! says her youngest sister, you had a good government of yourself to refrain unbosoming to some of us; especially considering my sister here (meaning her eldest sister) had been so serious with you upon that very head before you were married.

Dear sister, says the widow, to what purpose is it for any woman, when she is married, to complain of her disappointments, which she knows she cannot mend?

Yo. Sist. That's true, my dear, but who is there that can deny themselves that ease to their grief?

Wid. Alas! complaining is but a poor ease to such sorrows; 'tis like sighing, which relieves the heart one moment, and doubly loads it the next.

Yo. Sist. Well, sister, seeing you had so entire a mastery over yourself in that part, and you brought the dominion of your reason over your passions, to so perfect an exercise, which is what I confess I must admire you for; I say, seeing you mastered yourself so well that way, I am obliged to think you mastered yourself as well within doors; and with good conduct, perhaps, you made it no inconvenience to you. I wish you would let us hear how you managed, that we may see, perhaps, difference of opinion may be so managed as to make no breaches in a family, and it might be as well as if it had been otherwise.

Wid. No, no, sister, don't fancy so. Our dear mother was wiser than so, and you were all wiser than I, to lay so much stress upon it as you did; I am a convert now to my mother's instructions, though it be too late to help it.

Yo. Sist. Why Mr. —— and you lived mighty easy. You were always mighty well with one another I thought.

Wid. It was impossible to be ill with him, he

was of so excellent a temper; but this makes my case perfectly instructing to others, and proves effectually, that no goodness of the disposition, no excess of affection, no prudent compliances, though they make the case rather better than worse, can yet make up, no, not in the least, or any way balance, the inexpressible deficiency that such a breach in religious matters makes in a family.

Fa. Ay, ay, my dear, I see it now, with a sad heart, but it was far from any of my thoughts then; you owe all the misery of it to my neglect.

Wid. Sir, I dare say you did not mistrust it; I remember you said he had always been a protestant when you was at Leghorn, and that you knew he was bred so.

Fa. Ay, my dear; but it was my business to have inquired further into it: I might easily have known it if I had inquired; for several merchants told me afterwards of it; but I laid no stress upon it; in short, I did not consider the consequences.

Yo. Sist. There is no need to afflict yourself now, sir, about it; my sister is delivered another way, sir, and the thing is over.

Fa. But I am a warning to all parents, that have the good of their children at heart, never to make light of such things, but search them to the bottom; and the more their children depend upon them, the greater is their obligation to be very careful.

Yo. Sist. Well, my sister is delivered from it all now.

Wid. It is a sad deliverance, sister; and it is a dreadful case to be so married, as that the death of a husband should be counted a deliverance; and especially of a good husband too.

Yo. Sist. I do believe he was a good husband indeed, that one particular excepted; but that was a

terrible circumstance, and would have made the best husband in the world a bad husband to me.

Wid. Ay, child, and so it did to me in some cases, though he was otherwise the best-humoured man, and the best husband imaginable.

Yo. Sist. No question there was some uneasiness at first, but it seems you got over it; I wish you would tell us, sister, how you managed the first discovery between you.

Wid. Truly, sister, the uneasiness was not so much at first as at last, and had we lived longer together, it must of necessity have grown worse, especially as the children grew up.

Yo. Sist. Indeed there you might have come to clash in matters very essential to your peace.

Wid. Might have clashed! do you say? indeed, sister, we must have clashed; it was unavoidable; it could not be, that I could be easy to have the children bred papists, or that he could have been easy to have them bred, as he called it, heretics.

Yo. Sist. It was impossible indeed; and the more you were both settled and serious in your opinions, the more impossible it would be for you to yield that point to one another.

Wid. Why you know, sister, Mr. ——— was a very serious, grave man, and I assure you, in his way, he was very devout; and this made his yielding to me sometimes to be very difficult to him; he had very strong struggles between his principles and his affection.

Eld. Sist. Dear sister, it is always so where there are differing opinions between a man and his wife; the more zealous and conscientious they are in their several ways, the more difficult it is for them to yield those points up to one another, which kindness and affection may incline them to give up. But

pray give us a little account of your first disputes about these things.

Wid. 'Tis a sad story, sister, and will bring many grievous things to remembrance.

Eld. Sist. I should be very unwilling to impose so irksome a task upon you; but I think it will be very instructing to us all.

Wid. Why it was not much above a fortnight after we came home, as I observed to you, before I discovered it, and the manner was thus: I wondered that every Sabbath-day my spouse contrived some excuse or other to avoid going to church with me; I had taken some notice of it before we went home, but the second Sabbath-day I took upon me to desire him to go; he seemed not to deny me, and went into the coach with me, but pretended a sudden thought, he was obliged to go up to St. James's; and having very civilly handed me out of the coach, and gone with me into the very place, made a light bow, when I could not stand to persuade, and went back.

Sist. What did he take the coach too, and leave you to come home on foot?

Wid. No, no; he never showed me so little respect as that; he went but as far as Temple Bar in the coach, and sent it back, charging the coachman to go and wait for his mistress, which he did: this, however, troubled me a little, and I began to be uneasy, though I knew not for what.

Sist. Why, my dear, did nothing occur to your thoughts, as it did to ours, about his pictures, his crucifixes, altar-pieces, and such things?

Wid. No, not at all: I had heard my father say it was the fashion in Italy; and it being so remote from my thoughts to imagine anything of what was the real case, I had, indeed, no thoughts at all

about it, till the following affair alarmed me. I was with him one day in our closet, and viewing his fine things, the pictures, imagery, and other rarities, of which he had abundance, and some pieces of antiquity, that are of very great value: he was mighty busy, and pleased in showing me things, and telling me what they were; for then they were as new to me almost, as they were to you: at last I went into the little room within his closet, and looked upon all the fine things there, where you know, sister, there are abundance of valuable pieces of paintings.

Sist. Yes, indeed, 'tis a charming place.

Wid. Upon the table there stood two fine silver candlesticks, gilded, with large wax candles in them; My dear, says I, like an innocent fool, these candlesticks are very fine, I think they are much finer than any we have about the house. My dear, says he, if you had rather have them in your closet, than to let them stand here, they shall be removed. No my dear, said I, if we should want them upon an extraordinary occasion, 'tis but borrowing them of you. We said no more of that then, but the next day he sent me in from a goldsmith's in Drury-lane, two pair of candlesticks, larger and finer than these, of very curious workmanship, and all the high embossed work double gilt.

Yo. Sist. So you had no need to grudge him those he used in his closet any more.

Wid. No, indeed. But to go on: after I had done speaking of the candlesticks, I laid my hands upon a large piece of crimson damask, which seemed to cover something that stood upon the table, and standing up about seven or eight inches high in the middle, looked as if there were several things together; and going to turn it up, I said,

What is under here, my dear? but added, with a smile, and thinking nothing of the matter, May I look? He smiled a little, but laying his hand upon it too, said, I had rather not, my dear; they are things I brought from Italy, but nothing of ornament. Well, well, says I, let it lie; I don't desire to look; not I, and immediately turned to look at a picture that hung near me, and all this while I was so dull as to perceive nothing.

Eld. Sist. Your curiosity was not much, it seems.

Wid. Innocence suspects nobody; but a strange turn in his countenance gave me an alarm which I was not aware of; for there was a visible hurry and confusion in his face, when he laid his hands upon the piece of damask to prevent my taking it up; and on a sudden, when I so easily and unconcernedly passed it off, all that chagrin went off his countenance in a moment, and he was as bright and as good-humoured again as ever; and this made me think afterwards that there was something in it more than usual.

Eld. Sist. You must have been very dull if you had not, seeing you perceived such a double alteration; and this would have heightened my desire to inquire further into it.

Wid. Perhaps it did so too in me; but I saw evidently he was concerned; and why should I make him uneasy? I could have passed a hundred such things by, and have restrained my curiosity while I had no suspicion.

Eld. Sist. Well, but what was this to the case? It seems here was no discovery then.

Wid. Yes, here was a discovery too, as it prepared for further observation: I told you that the next day he sent me home two pair of candlesticks, which were indeed very fine; and as I was admir-

ing them, I desired to have the other fetched down, to compare them with; upon which he made some difficulty, and said he could not trust a servant to go into his closet alone, when things of consequence lay about; But, my dear, says he, we will go up and match them.

Eld. Sist. Well, that reason was just enough.

Wid. It was so; and I went up with him into his closet, but not into the inner room; but I observed just when he stepped in, he made an extraordinary low bow towards that place where the candlesticks stood. Indeed I took no notice of it at first, for I verily thought he had stooped for something, but when he carried the candlesticks in again, he did the same, and that gave me some thought.

Yo. Sist. That was a discovery indeed.

Wid. No, really it was not yet; for I was a perfect stranger to any of their popish ceremonies, I scarce understood it when I was told: but however, it gave me some idea of this being an extraordinary place, though I did not know what; and I very innocently asked this foolish, laughing question; My dear, you are mighty mannerly to your empty rooms, you bow as if the king was there. He put it off with a smile, and an answer that was indeed according to Solomon, *Answer a fool in his folly:* My dear, says he, 'tis our custom in Italy.

Eld. Sist. He was no fool; what he said was very true.

Wid. Well, even all this while, and further, I was still blind; for a little after I pushed into the same place with him, not out of curiosity, but merely by chance; but though the piece of crimson damask lay upon the table, yet there was nothing under it, nor did he make any bow as before.

Yo. Sist. No, my dear, there was no need of it then; for to be sure the idol was removed.

Wid. Well, however, as that was more than I knew, it caused all my former hesitations and observations to vanish, till they were renewed again upon the following occasion: he was taken ill one evening, in a manner that alarmed me very much, and we were obliged to get him to bed with all speed; but just as he was undressing by the bedside, he started up in a kind of rapture, and pulling a string which drew back a curtain, he cast up his eyes towards a picture that hung there, and said some words which I did not understand, and I perceived he crossed himself two or three times on the breast, and then stepped into bed.

Fa. To one that had lived in Italy this had been no novelty at all.

Wid. No, sir, I understand it well enough now, but I did not then; however, it was so plain then, that it needed no explanation to me; but it was such a surprise to me, that I thought I should have fainted: my heart sunk within me, and with a sigh, said I to myself, O Lord! I am undone! I thought I had spoken so softly, that nothing could have overheard me; but yet so unhappy was my passion, that he heard the last words, and raising his voice, My dear, says he, hastily, what's the matter? What art thou undone for? I made him no answer, which increased his eagerness to know what ailed me; but I declined it. At last, pressing me still, I answered, My dear, excuse me for the present, I am a little frighted; with which he rings a little bell, that I used to ring for my woman, and she being but in the next room, came running in: I bid her fetch me a little bottle out of my closet, and taking a few drops rather by a counterfeit illness than a real, put an end to his inquiry, and got him to sleep

Eld. Sist. I should e'en have charged him with it downright, and have raved at him for a rogue, that had cheated and deluded me.

Wid. Indeed, sister, I did not do so; I was oppressed with the terror of it, and the disappointment, but my affection stept in the way of all resentment; I loved him tenderly; and besides, it was not a time for it; for he was really very ill, and thought he should have died; it was a spice or taste of the same distemper that did at last kill him, for it was a pleurisy: and after he had slept a little, he waked again in such a condition that frighted all the house, and we were forced to fetch a surgeon out of his bed to let him blood.

Sist. Well, that relieved him, I hope.

Wid. Yes, it did; but I name it to tell you a circumstance which attended it: we had in the house an old man, an Italian, whom he always kept in the counting-house to copy his letters, and translate his Italian accounts, and for such other business as he employed him in; and they called him doctor: the surgeon we had sent for, being in bed, did not come time enough, and he grew black, and desperately ill, which frighted me exceedingly; and when he saw I was under a surprise, he made signs (for he could not speak to be understood, he was so bad) to call up the old Italian. When he came into the room, he held out his arm, and pointing at it with his finger, every one might understand that he meant he should let him blood: upon which, immediately the old man called for things proper, and I found he had a lancet in his pocket; I asked him if he had been used to it: he said, Yes, madam, I have let him blood several times before now. In a word, he opened a vein, and it gave him ease, and he recovered soon after.

Fa. I'll lay a hundred pound, then, that doctor is a priest.

Wid. Yes, sir, he is so; and I knew it quickly after.

Fa. And after he knew that you understood it, did he not besiege you with his discourses and importunities, my dear, to turn?

Wid. No really; at least not so as I believe is usual; he frequently let fall some words about it, but with great modesty; for he was really a very good sort of a man, exceeding retired and devout; very mannerly and respectful: he spoke once at table, (for sometimes my spouse would ask me to let him sup with us,) and we had been talking very cheerfully, when the doctor said something in Italian to his master, that gave me plain reasons to know that he desired I should know what he said; upon which my spouse said to me, My dear, what do you think the doctor says? I don't know, but I am sure it is about me. Yes, says he, so it is; and he says I must tell you what it is, or else you will think he is unmannerly, to speak anything in a language you do not understand. Well, pray, said I, what is it he says? What pity is it, said my spouse, such a fine genius as my lady your wife is, should not be within the pale of the catholic church! While my spouse was telling me this, he looked very earnestly at him to observe when he repeated the words, and just as he repeated them, the good old father lift up his eyes, and said some words softly, but with great appearance of seriousness, which, it seems, was to pray to Christ to convert me; and my spouse looking very seriously too, crossed himself, and said Amen.

Yo. Sist. This was dangerous work indeed, sister; for the more serious they were in it, the more it would have affected me.

Wid. Indeed so it did me; I answered my husband, My dear, I hope I am; and if I thought I was not, I would not sleep till I was. At which the doctor, my spouse repeating the words to him, shook his head, and said, No, no! signifying that to be sure I was not; and added, he hoped God would hear his prayers for me; but this was the most that ever he offered that way.

Fa. Well, that was nothing but what any man, who thought himself in the right, might do, and very modestly too.

Wid. Indeed, he always kept himself rather at a greater distance than we desired.

Yo. Sist. Well, but pray go back to the story.

Wid. Why, I told you my husband recovered from his illness; but it was otherwise with me; for being now fully satisfied that my spouse was a papist, it cast me down to that degree, and overwhelmed my spirits, that I was scarce able to bear it, and especially for want of somebody to lodge my thoughts with, and open my soul to.

Eld. Sist. Why, did you not charge him with it point-blank? Did he not perceive your disorder?

Wid. He did to be sure, and pressed me, with the utmost tenderness and importunity, to let him know what grieved me.

Eld. Sist. Ay, and I should have told him of it in his ears.

Wid. Dear sister, you are too tender a wife yourself not to know that where there is a sincere affection, even the highest resentment expresses itself in the softest terms. I could afflict myself freely, but I could not think of afflicting him; and though I do acknowledge I thought myself ill-treated, yet I could not use him ill in return.

Sist. Come, tell us what you said to him.

Wid. Why, when he pressed me to let him know

what disturbed me, I told him I had rather bear my grief than complain to him; that I was too sensible he knew what I meant, when I said I was undone; and I begged him not to oblige me to blame him, for not having been just to me. Why, my dear, says he, why are you undone? if your opinion in religion and mine may differ, must it affect our love? cannot we be dear to one another without entering into disputes of that kind? Yes, said I, my dear, I know better than to enter into disputes with you; but I must reckon myself undone for all that. Tears stopped my very breath for awhile, for this was an open acknowledgment of his profession; and I would fain have flattered myself so much, as to hope there was yet some room to have thought myself mistaken. When he saw me so overwhelmed, he came to me, and took me in his arms, and said all the kind things it is possible to think of, to pacify me: My dear, says he, though you may think this a grief to you, expect to have it made up abundantly, by all that it is possible for man to do to oblige you: and indeed if all the affectionate things a man could say or do, could make it up, it was made up to me: if it was possible for man to do anything to make a woman forget her disappointment, he did it; and this from a man too, who had a perfect understanding of everything that could oblige and engage the affections: in a word, no man could do more, or woman desire more, to make up the loss.

Eld. Sist. Well, sister, and pray tell me, did it do? Was it fully made up to you? Is it possible that two can be happy in the condition of man and wife, where opinions in religion differ? You have had the experience of it to be sure in its best fortune, with all the advantages imaginable. Now be plain, and tell us is it possible the conjugal felicity

can be complete? Was our dear mother in the right or no, sister?

Wid. Indeed, sister, you put hard upon me, because I know I too much slighted my mother's injunctions; and I remember I jested with you about it, but I paid for the experiment.

Eld. Sist. Dear sister, those things are forgotten long ago; I did not intend to reflect upon them; but I ask upon a serious account, I assure you.

Wid. Why, truly, sister, I must acknowledge it impossible. No kindness, no tenderness, no affection, can make it up; the condition can never be happy, God faithfully served, children rightly educated, the mind perfectly easy, or the duty of the relation faithfully performed, where the opinions in religion differ.

Eld. Sist. I am of opinion also, that it would have been the same, though your difference had not been so great as that of papist and protestant.

Wid. Ay, ay, all one! for we never entered into the question about our principles; I resolved it from the beginning, to avoid bringing on anything that might be unkind or disobliging between us, and he approved it, and did the same for the same reason; so that I never, after the first discourse, so much as inquired what his opinion was. It was sufficient to have the grief that we could not worship God together, either abroad or at home; we could not think of one another with charity, but as deceived persons, out of the way of eternal felicity, out of God's blessing and protection; we could not look upon one another but with sighs and sad hearts. Again, we could never converse with one another upon religious subjects, for we would not enter upon the least serious thing but it led us into contradictions and wild distracted notions, which we were immediately forced to take the help of our affec-

tions to suppress, that we might not break out into indecencies to one another.

Yo. Sist. Well, sister, and what became of your smart answers to my sister ——, when she and you talked of these things, viz., that if he was not of your opinion, you would be of his; that if he was a Christian catholic you was a catholic Christian; and so you would have no difference about that?

Wid. Why truly, sister, I was young, and did not consider what I said; and, besides, I did not in the least suspect what my sister suggested; and yet so far I have kept up to it, we have by the help of abundance of good-humour on both sides, and a great deal of love on both sides, avoided differences and disputes upon that subject. But alas! sister, that's but a negative, and it can only be said we did not quarrel, which is a great deal to say too; but what's this to a happy life? How was our family guided, our children educated, and how would they have been educated if he had lived! And how was God worshipped! He and his priest at their mass in the oratory or chapel; I and my little unhappy babies in my chamber and closet, where I mourned over them continually, rather than prayed over them, to think that some time or other they should be snatched from me and brought up in popery; nor would it have been much otherwise, if he had been of any other irreconcileable opinion; for, as I told you before, though I knew his opinion, I never asked it; for any opinion, where there is not a harmony in worshipping, a joining in public prayer to God, and in joint serving him in our families, is the same thing, only not in the same extreme.

Yo. Sist. Well, but had you no private breaches about it?

Wid. No, never; we carefully avoided it. But this is but an evidence of the dreadful consequences

of such marriages in general; For where is there a couple that can say, as we could, that they have had no jars about it? And what breaches have religious differences made in families? But if the happiness is so little, and the evil consequences so many, even with a husband so exquisitely kind and obliging, and where a woman cannot say she has any one other thing to complain of, what must be the case in other families?

Yo. Sist. But, sister, you hint that the longer you lived, the worse those differences grew.

Wid. Why it was impossible, sister, but as we grew forward, these things must have come more in our way. We have four children, and Mr. ——— was not a man so indifferent in his religion, as to be more careless about the souls of his children, that I assure you; and though he left them entirely to my management when they were little, yet he would hint sometimes, that he hoped I would leave them free when they grew up, to choose for themselves as God should enlighten them; and that at least we should both stand neuter.

Yo. Sist. What could you say to that?

Wid. I told him I could not tell how far I could promise that; for if I thought myself in the right way to heaven, I could but ill answer it to Him that gave me my children, to stand still and see them go wrong, and not endeavour to persuade them, at least, to choose better for themselves. He told me that was an argument just as strong on his side as it was on mine. And, he added, smiling, how shall we do then to agree, my dear, when it comes to that? I hope we shall not love less than we do now. I told him I had a great many melancholy thoughts about it; and thus at last we were always fain to drop the discourse; but to this hour I cannot conceive how we should have done to have

divided our children's instruction between us, if he had lived to see them grow up.

Fa. Well, my dear, God has otherwise ordered it; and I hope the children will have the benefit of a good instruction now, without that interruption.

Wid. Alas! sir, I perceive you do not know their case yet; and this is a remaining grief to me that I have not mentioned.

Fa. What's that, child?

Wid. Why, sir, by his will he has appointed the old priest, whom I named above, to be tutor to my two sons, and has settled his estate so, that unless the trustees bring them up Roman catholics, a great deal of the estate goes from them; so that I am to be robbed of my children.

Fa. I am surprised at that. Why I never heard a word of it! And what has he done then with his two daughters?

Wid. He has left them to me.

Fa. Did you know this before, child? Had you any discourse about it before he died?

Wid. Yes, sir, as much as the violence of his distemper would admit; I entreated, I persuaded, I argued, as much as tears and my oppressed thoughts would allow me; for I thought my heart would have burst while I talked to him, to see his condition, whom I loved as my own soul, and to think what was to befall my children; you can hardly conceive what a time it was to me; it wounds my very spirit to look back upon it.

Eld. Sist. It was a very bitter thing, no doubt; but what said he to you?

Wid. He begged of me not to importune him. He told me it was far from being unkindness to me, but his conscience obliged him to it, and he could not die in peace if he did not, as far as in him lay, provide for the souls of his children.

Fa. Why if it was his conscience, how came it to pass he did not do the like by his daughters?

Wid. Why he said, he thought I had a right to their government, as a half of the family; For, my dear, says he, we are partners; but, says he, I entreat you, and, as far as I am able to do it, enjoin you to it, let the poor innocent babes be reconciled to the church, and brought up in the catholic faith; and I hope you will in God's due time embrace it yourself.

Yo. Sist. What was you able to say to him?

Wid. I bless God I made no promise about my children; nor, indeed, was I able to speak to him for grief, for he was in such agonies, that my heart could not hold to stay by him; and the next morning he died: and now I am a dreadful example of the miserable condition of a married state where principles of religion differ, though with the best husband in the world.

Fa. But, my dear, do not afflict yourself now about your sons.

Wid. Not afflict myself, sir! is that possible?

Fa. Yes, yes; they shall not be bred up papists, I'll assure you, for all that he has done to bring it to pass.

Wid. Alas, sir! they will be taken away from me.

Fa. No, no; nor shall they be taken away from you neither; our laws give you a right to the bringing up your own children; and as for the doctor, I'll engage he shall give you no disturbance; he knows his own circumstances, and I'll take care that he shall take it for a favour to be concealed here, and leave all to you.

Wid. But then the estate will go from my children too.

Fa. Perhaps not, neither; but if it should, you have enough for them.

Wid. Well, that's none of my care; let me but keep them from a wrong education, I'll willingly leave that part to fall as it will.

Yo. Sist. But, dear sister, did Mr. —— never try you by arguments to bring you over to him?

Wid. Only by all that he could ever advise, except as I said before: for I must do that justice to his memory, that he never offered anything that was rough, or threatening, or limiting, or unkind; but all on the contrary, to the highest extreme.

Yo. Sist. That was the effect of his extraordinary good breeding, and his being so much a gentleman.

Wid. Not that altogether, sister, though that might join; but it was the effect of an excellent disposition, and of an inexpressible affection to me in particular; for otherwise he was the most zealous man, in his way, that ever was heard of, and thought everybody an enemy to him that would not be of his own opinion.

Eld. Sist. Did he never go about to bribe you to it?

Wid. O sister! very frequently, and that with all the subtelty of invention in the world; for he was always giving me presents upon that very account.

Fa. Presents to a wife! what do they signify? 'tis but taking his money out of one pocket and putting it into the other; they must all be appraised, child, in the personal estate.

Wid. It has been quite otherwise with him, indeed, sir; for he has made it a clause in his will, that all the presents he gave me shall be my own, to bestow how I please; besides all the rest that he has left me more than he was obliged to do.

Eld. Sist. Then they seem to be considerable.

Wid. He has, first and last, given me above 3000*l.*

in presents, and most of them on this very account: but one was very extraordinary, I mean to that purpose.

Eld. Sist. I suppose that is your diamond cross.

Wid. It is so; he brought it home in a little case, and coming into my room one morning before I was dressed, hearing I was alone, he told me, smiling, and very pleasant, he was come to say his prayers to me: I confess I had been a little out of humour just at that time, having been full of sad thoughts all the morning about the grand point, and I was going to have given him a very unkind answer, but his looks had so much goodness and tenderness always in them, that when I looked up at him I could retain no more resentment: indeed, sister, it was impossible to be angry with him.

Eld. Sist. You might well be in humour, indeed, when he brought you a present worth above six hundred pounds.

Wid. But I had not seen the present when what I am telling you passed between us.

Eld. Sist. Well, I ask pardon for interrupting you; pray go on where you left off, when he told you he was come to say his prayers to you.

Wid. I told him I hoped he would not make an idol of his wife.

Eld. Sist. Was that the ill-natured answer you were about to give him?

Wid. No, indeed; I was going to tell him he need not worship me, he had idols enough in the house.

Eld. Sist. That had been bitter and unkind, indeed; I hope you did not say so.

Wid. Indeed I did not; nor would I have said so for a thousand pounds; it would have grieved me every time I had reflected on it afterwards as long as I had lived.

Eld. Sist. It was so very apt a return, I dare say I should not have brought my prudence to have mastered the pleasure of such a repartee.

Wid. Dear sister, 'tis a sorry pleasure that is taken in grieving a kind husband; besides, sister, as it was my great mercy that my husband strove constantly to make his difference in religion as little troublesome and offensive to me as possible, it would very ill have become me to make it my jest; it had been a kind of bespeaking the uneasinesses which it was my happiness to avoid.

Eld. Sist. Well, you had more temper than I should have had, I dare say; but I must own you were in the right: come, pray how did you go on?

Wid. Why he answered he hoped he worshipped no idols but me; and if he erred in that point, whoever reproved him, he hoped I would not.

Eld. Sist. Why that's true too: besides, 'tis not so often that men make idols of their wives.

Wid. Well, while he was saying this he pulls out the jewel, and opening the case, takes a small crimson string that it hung to, and put it about my neck, but kept the jewel in his hand so that I could not see it; and then taking me in his arms, Sit down, my dear, says he; which I did upon a little stool: then he kneeled down just before me, and kissing the jewel, let it go, saying something in Italian, which I did not understand, and then looking up in my face, Now, my dear, says he, you are my idol.

Eld. Sist. Well, sister, 'tis well he is dead.

Wid. Dear sister, how can you say such words to me!

Eld. Sist. He would certainly have conquered you at last.

Wid. If the tenderest and most engaging temper, the sincerest and warmest affection in nature, could have done it, he would have done it, that's certain.

Eld. Sist. And I make no doubt but they are the most dangerous weapons to attack a woman's principles; I cannot but think them impossible to resist: passion, unkindness, and all sorts of conjugal violence, of which there is a great variety in a married life, are all nothing to them: you remember, sister, some lines on another occasion, but very much to the case:

> Force may, indeed, the heart invade,
> But kindness only can persuade.

Wid. I grant that 'tis difficult to resist the influence of so much affection; and everything that came from so sincere a principle, and to a mind prepossessed with all the sentiments of tenderness and kindness possible to be expressed, made a deep impression: but I thank God I stood my ground.

Eld. Sist. Well, well, you would not have stood it long, I am persuaded; and this is one of the great hazards a woman runs in marrying a man of a differing religion, or a differing opinion from herself, viz., that her affection to her husband is her worst snare; and so that which is her duty, and her greatest happiness, is made the most dangerous gulf she can fall into: well might our dear mother warn us from marrying men of different opinions.

Wid. It is very true, I acknowledge it; my love was my temptation, my affection to my husband went always nearest to stagger my resolution: I was in no danger upon any other account.

Yo. Sist. Well, but pray go on about the jewel; what said you to him?

Wid. Truly, sister, I'll be very plain with you; when he kissed the jewel on his knees, and muttered, as I tell you, in Italian, I was rather provoked than obliged; and I said, I think you are saying your

prayers indeed, my dear; tell me what you are doing. What did you say?

Yo. Sist. Indeed I should have been frighted.

Wid. Dear sister, let me confess to you, fine presents, flattering words, and the affectionate looks of so obliging, so dear, and so near a relation, are dreadful things, when they assault principles; the glittering jewel had a strange influence, and my affections began to be too partial on his side: O let no woman that values her soul venture into the arms of a husband of a different religion! the kinder he is, the more likely to undo her; everything that endears him to her, doubles her danger; the more she loves him, the more she inclines to yield to him; the more he loves her, the stronger are the bonds by which he draws her; and her only mercy would be to have him barbarous and unkind to her.

Yo. Sist. It is indeed a sad case, where to be miserable is the only safety; but so it is, no doubt; and such is the case of every woman that is thus unsuitably matched: if her husband is kind, he is a snare to her; if unkind, he is a terror to her; his love, which is his duty, is her ruin; and his slighting her, which is his scandal, is her protection.

Wid. It was my case, dear sister; such a jewel! such a husband! how could I speak an unkind word? everything he did was so engaging, everything he said was so moving, what could I say or do?

Eld. Sist. Very true; and that makes me say he would have conquered you at last.

Wid. Indeed I can't tell what he might have done if he had lived.

Yo. Sist. Well, but to the jewel: what said you to him?

Wid. I stood up and thanked him with a kind of ceremony, but told him I wished it had been rather in any other form. Why, my dear, says he, should

not the two most valuable forms in the world be placed together? I told him that as he placed a religious value upon it, he should have it rather in another place. He told me my breast should be his altar; and so he might adore with a double delight: I told him I thought he was a little profane, and since I did not place the same value upon it, or make the same use of it, as he did, I might give him offence by mere necessity, and make that difference which we had both avoided with so much care, break in upon us in a case not to be resisted. He answered, No, my dear, I am not going to bribe your principles, much less force them: put you what value you think fit upon it, and give me the liberty. I told him I hoped I should not undervalue it as his present, if I did not overvalue it upon another account. He returned warmly, My dear, the last is impossible; and for the first, 'tis a trifle; give it but leave to hang where I have placed it, and that's all the respect I ask you to show it on my account.

Yo. Sist. Well, that was a favour you would not deny if a stranger had given it you.

Wid. Dear sister, you are a stranger to the case; if you had seen what was the consequence of it, you would have been frighted, or perhaps have fallen quite out with him.

Yo. Sist. I cannot imagine what consequences you mean.

Wid. Why, first of all, he told me that now he would be perfectly easy about my salvation, and would cease to pursue me with arguments or entreaties in religious matters.

Yo. Sist. What could he mean by that?

Wid. Why he said he was sure that blessed form that hung so near my heart, would have a miraculous influence some time or other, and I should

be brought home into the bosom of the catholic church.

Yo. Sist. Well I should have ventured all that, and have slighted the very thoughts of it.

Wid. You cannot imagine what stress he laid on it; now, he said, every good catholic that saw me but pass by them, would pray for me; and that every one in particular would exorcise me by the passion of Christ out of the chains of heresy.

Yo. Sist. What said you to him?

Wid. I put it off with a smile, but my heart was full, I scarce knew how to hold; and he perceived it easily, and broke off the talk a little; but he fell to it again, till he saw the tears stood in my eyes, when he took me in his arms, and kissed me again; kissed my neck where the cross hung, and then kissed the jewel, repeating the word Jesu two or thee times, and left me.

Eld. Sist. This was all superstition, sister; I should not have borne it; I would have thrown the jewel in his face, or on the ground, and have set my foot on it.

Wid. No, sister, you would not have done so, I am sure; neither was it my business to do so; my business was not to quarrel with my husband about his religion, which it was now too late to help, but to keep him from being uneasy about mine.

Eld. Sist. I should not have had so much patience; I would not have lived with him; I do not think it had been my duty.

Wid. Nay, sister, that's expressly contrary to the Scripture, where this very case is stated in the plainest manner imaginable, *The woman that hath a husband that believeth not, if he will dwell with her, let her not leave him,* 1 Cor. vii. 13.

Eld. Sist. That's true indeed; I spoke rashly,

sister, in that; but it was a case, I confess, I do not know what I should have done in it; I would not have bore it then.

Wid. That had been very disobliging.

Eld. Sist. I would have obliged him to have foreborne his little idolatrous tricks then, and used them on other occasions.

Wid. That had been to desire him not to be a Roman catholic: why, in foreign countries that are popish, as I understand, they never go by a cross, whether it be on the road, or on any building, but what they pull off their hats.

Fa. So they do, my dear, and often kneel down, though it be in the dirt, and say over their prayers.

Wid. It is impossible to tell you how many attacks I had of that kind when I wore this jewel.

Fa. I do not doubt of it; especially if he brought any strangers into the room: how did you do, child, when the Venetian ambassador dined at your house? had you it on then?

Wid. Yes, sir, my spouse desired me to put it on, and I could not well deny him: but I did not know how to behave; for the ambassador and all his retinue paid so many bows and homages to me, or to the cross, that I scarce knew what to do with myself, nor was I able to distinguish their good manners from their religion; and it was well I did not then understand Italian, for, as my dear told me afterwards, they said a great many religious things that would have given me offence.

Fa. Those things are so frequent in Italy, that the protestant ladies take no notice of them, and yet they all wear crosses, but sometimes put them out of sight.

Wid. I did so afterwards; I lengthened the string it hung to, that it might hang a little lower; but it was too big; if it went within my stays it would hurt

me: nor was it much odds to him; for if he saw the string he knew the cross was there, and it was all one.

Yo. Sist. Did he use any ceremony to it after the first time?

Wid. Always when he first came into any room where I was he was sure to give me his knee with his bow, and kiss the cross as well as his wife.

Eld. Sist. I should never have borne it.

Wid. You could never have resisted it more than I, for I did what I could; but his answer was clear, My dear, says he, take no notice of me, let my civilities be to you, take them all to yourself; I cannot show you too much respect: believe it is all your own, and be easy with me.

Eld. Sist. How could he bid you believe what you knew to be otherwise? why did you not leave it off, and reproach him with the difference?

Wid. Dear sister, I did so for months together: but then he doubled his ceremonies, and told me I only mortified him, then, by obliging him to reverence the place where once the blessed figure had been lodged, as the holy pilgrims worshipped the sepulchre.

Eld. Sist. He was too hard for you every way, sister.

Wid. Ay, and would have been too hard for you too, if you had had him.

Eld. Sist. It is my mercy that I had him not.

Wid. Well, it was my mercy too, that, as I had him, I had less inconvenience with the unhappy circumstance than I must have had, perhaps, with any other man of his principles in the world.

Eld. Sist. That's true; only this I must add, viz., that those engaging ways would certainly, first or last, have brought you to popery.

Wid. I hope not, sister; but I cannot say, when

I seriously reflect on it, how far I might have been led.

Fa. My dear, let me ask you a question or two about that: I know the first method they take in such cases is to let you see that you have been mistaken in your notions about popery; that the difference is not so great as has been suggested unto you; that we are all Christians; that we worship the same God, believe the same creed, expect eternal life by the merits of the same Saviour, and the like; and by this method they bring us at first not to have such frightful ideas of the Roman catholic religion as we had before.

Wid. That's true; and this I had frequently in discourse; and I confess such discourse had some effect on me.

Yo. Sist. It lessened the aversion you had to them, no doubt.

Wid. It's true they became not so frightful to me as before; but they had another argument which my dear often used to me, and it was this: My dear, says he, all your own divines, and all that have written on these subjects, own that a papist, as you call us, may be saved, that it is possible for us to go to heaven; our church have no room to believe so of the protestants: why, if you may go to heaven among us, should you not join with us?

Eld. Sist. I know not what answer I should have given to that.

Wid. I know not what your answer would have been, but I'll tell you what mine was; I told him I did not know but it might be so, and I was willing to have as much charity as I had affection for him; but as for myself, I was sure I could not go to heaven that way, because I must act against my own light.

Yo. Sist. That was the true answer, indeed: what could he say to it?

Wid. Then he told me he would pray for me, that I might be further enlightened; and he did not doubt but to prevail: I thanked him, and told him I would do the same for him, and that though perhaps it might not be with so strong a faith, I was sure it would be with as earnest a desire.

Yo. Sist. Well, you stood your ground nobly, sister; but 'tis a mercy to you that your perseverance was tried no further: 'tis a dreadful thing to have so dangerous an enemy so near one.

Wid. It's true, there lay my danger; for, I must own, words spoken with so much tenderness have a singular effect, and sink deeper in the mind, than others, especially where the affection is so mutual as it was with us.

Eld. Sist. Why, sister, do you think, in time, his tenderness, and his affectionate way of treating you, would not have abated?

Wid. I often feared it, but indeed I never found it; sometimes I suggested it to him that I feared it; and one day I told him that if I did not turn, I was afraid he would. He guessed what I meant, but would have me explain myself; Why, my dear, says I, when I reflect what your thoughts are about protestants, that they are out of the pale of the church, and in a condition that they cannot be saved, I cannot but apprehend that if I do not come over to your opinion, your love to me will abate, and at last turn into a stated aversion and hatred. How can you love an object which you think God hates? My dear, says he, taking me very affectionately in his arms, I will prevent all your fears by telling you, that were what you mention possible, it could not be till I utterly despaired of your ever being brought

over to the church; and I shall never be brought to believe but God will open your eyes first or last: and, besides, my earnest desire to persuade you, and win you to embrace the true religion, will teach me to do it by all the tenderness and love that it is possible for me to show you; for to be unkind to you would be the way to drive you further off: but be it as it will, I can never abate my affection to you; and, my dear, says he, with the most obliging, passionate air of concern that it was possible to show, I hope that to love you tenderly and violently is not the way to keep you at a distance from the church, but rather to draw you, to engage you, and let you see that peace, love, joy, charity, and all the virtues of a Christian, are to be found among us, and not that we are furies and tyrants, as we have been represented. And when he had said this, holding me still in his arms, he kissed me several times, and went on: My dear, says he, let God alone change your heart his own way; I'll never take any method but that of loving you sincerely and most passionately, while I live, and praying for you even after I am in heaven. While he said this I saw such an inexpressible tenderness in his countenance, and every word came from him with such passion, that I could not hold from tears; but he had not done with me yet, for, while he held me in one arm, he put his other hand in his pocket, and taking out his pocket-book, he bid me open it, and there dropped out a loose paper, doubled pretty thick, which I took up, and went to put it in again: Take that paper, my dear, says he, and put it up; you shall have a pledge for the continuance of my affection to you, whether you change your opinion or no. I opened it, but could read very little of it, for I had but newly begun to learn Italian. What is it, my dear? said I. It is, said he, an assignment

on the bank of Genoa for two thousand ducats a year, and it shall be made over to your father in trust for you, and to whoever you will bestow it after you.

Eld. Sist. Well, sister, I would never tell this story to any protestant lady that was in the least danger of marrying a Roman.

Fa. Why, child, if her story be told with it, I think it may be told to advantage.

Eld. Sist. It may teach them, indeed, to pray, *Lead us not into temptation.* Well, sister, I must repeat what I have said before to you, though it does grieve you; 'tis your great mercy that he is dead.

Wid. O do not speak such a word, sister; it wounds my very soul.

Eld. Sist. Pray answer me this short question, then: Would you marry such another papist?

Wid. There's not such another upon earth, sister; and besides, how can you name the word? that's the unkindest thing you could think of: I must break off the discourse.

Eld. Sist. Do not call it unkind; I do not mean it the way you take it. Suppose things at the remotest distance you can, or suppose it to be any other body's case, would you advise any other person that had such an offer, I say, would you advise them to marry such another?

Wid. No, sister, not to be a princess.

Eld. Sist. I am answered; and I must own, I should take them for distracted if they did.

Wid. Unless the lady resolved to turn papist; and if that, she would do best to do it beforehand, openly and avowedly, that she might not be under the reflection of doing it on a worse account, viz., by compulsion.

Yo. Sist. But after you have said so many things

of him, that are enough to recommend him, not to the affection, but even to the admiration of any one, what can you say to persuade any young woman not to think that you were very happy in him, and that consequently they would be so with such another?

Wid. O sister! do not suggest that I was happy with him: I had as few happy hours as it was possible for any one to have that ever had a good husband.

Yo. Sist. How can you convince any one of that?

Wid. Why, sister, it is plain to any one that knows wherein the happiness of life consists. It is true I wanted nothing; I lived in the abundance of all things; I had the best-humoured husband on earth, and one that loved me to an extreme; which, had not our case indeed called for so much affection another way, would have been a sin; for, in a word, he summed up all his earthly felicity in his wife.

Eld. Sist. If you were to give that account to the gentlemen of this age, they would say you were writing the character of a fool.

Wid. It is no matter for that; it was his mercy and mine too; for if it had been otherwise, we had been the miserablest creatures alive; it was bad enough as it was; and all that knew him, will grant that he was no fool.

Yo. Sist. But what do you think then would have been the consequence, if, as you say, he had loved you less? Wherein must you have been miserable?

Wid. Why, sister, if his abundant affection had not closed every debate with kindness, whither must we have run! If he had not checked all the forwardness of his religious zeal for converting me, by his love to me, to what severity in our mutual re-

proaches should we have gone on! In a word, sister, I must have turned, or turned out of doors; I must have been a papist, or we must have parted.

Yo. Sist. Why sister, you know there's Mr. P——— and his wife are in the very same case, and yet they agree well enough.

Wid. Dear sister, how can you name them! He is a papist, and she is a protestant, and when the name is taken away, it is hard to tell whether either of them have any religion or no, nor do they care one farthing which way either goes: people that can live easy without religion, may live easy with any religion; that is not the case we are speaking of.

Eld. Sist. There is a difference there, I confess.

Wid. But if, sister, a religious life be the only heaven upon earth, as we have been taught to believe, tell me, if you represent such a case to yourself, what must it be for two to live together, who place their happiness really in such a life as we call religious, but differ so extremely about what religion to build it upon? That agree in the general, but not in the particulars; that aim mutually at the same end, viz., going to heaven, but turn back to back as to the way thither? Can a religious life be formed between such as these! and if not, then they are mutually deprived of that heaven upon earth, which, as you and I agree, is alone to be found in a religious life.

Eld. Sist. That's true, but then in such a case the enjoyment must be reserved and singular, and a woman must keep her religion to herself.

Wid. But you will allow her then to be deprived at once of all social religion, of all family religion, and, by consequence, of all the comfort of a religious husband.

Eld. Sist. Nay, that's true, and I am not speak-

ing for it; but asking your experience, whether with so tender a husband, as you had, it might not be otherwise?

Wid. Dear sister, his tenderness, as I said before, was my great mercy, as it made him bear with my obstinacy, as he called it. Had he had the same tenderness, and been indifferent in his principles, I might have turned him; but had he wanted that tenderness, and yet been as zealous in his religion as he was, he must have turned me, or I must have lived a dreadful life with him.

Yo. Sist. I find he was a mighty religious man in his way.

Wid. To the greatest degree imaginable devout, and very serious, I assure you.

Yo. Sist. Well, though he was mistaken in his principles, yet he was the more sober, the more honest, and every way the better prepared to be a good man.

Wid. His devotion made him, without doubt, the better man; but if it had not been for the restraints of his affection, it had certainly made him the worse husband.

Yo. Sist. So that in this question of marrying a man of a different opinion in religion, you suppose that the more devout and serious the person is in his way, the worse husband.

Wid. Without question it is so; the zeal in their own opinions makes them always uneasy and impatient with their wives, teasing and baiting them with impertinent disputes, and even driving them by force of restless importunities (which, by the way, is the worst sort of persecution) into a compliance.

Yo. Sist. I agree with you in that part: but, sister, you say, that even when your husband's love was your protection from these importunities, you were

yet unhappy, and could not be able to lead a religious life.

Wid. No, sister, I did not say so; I said we could not have a religious family; all social religion was lost; mutual help and assistance in religion were wanting; public worshipping God in the family, as a house, could not be set up; education and instruction of children was all destroyed; example to servants and inferiors all spoiled; nothing could be of religion, but what was merely personal and retired.

Aunt. There indeed you are right, niece.

Wid. I assure you, madam, from my experience, that next to the having the husband and wife be religious, or at least religiously inclined, they that would have a religious family, should take as much care as possible to have religious servants.

Aunt. I agree with you in that, my dear, with all my heart.

Wid. It is impossible to preserve the necessary rules of a religious family without it, or to have a due regard shown to the orders which must be given on that account.

Aunt. Nay, child, I go further than that; I insist, that our servants ought to be so chosen, as to be of the same opinions too in religion as ourselves.

Wid. I have not so much considered that part indeed; but I believe, madam, the reasons for it are very good.

Aunt. I have a great deal to say to that from my own experience.

Eld. Sist. And so have I too, madam, from what I have seen in some families of my acquaintance.

Wid. I have seen enough of it in my little family, to make me resolve, that while I have a family, and can keep any servants, I will entertain

none but such as worship God the same way as I worship him.

Eld. Sist. And did so before you took them; I hope you mean so, sister.

Wid. Yes, indeed, I do mean so too.

Aunt. I must put in an exception, niece, there, in behalf of poor ignorant creatures that may come into a family untaught, and are willing to be instructed in things that are good.

Wid. I know not what to say to that part, because I am but ill qualified for a schoolmistress.

Aunt. Well, we will discourse of this by itself, niece, for I have a great deal to say upon that subject.

Wid. With all my heart, madam.

Aunt. But in the mean time, child, let us go now where we left off.

Wid. There was as much religion in our house as it was possible there should be, in our circumstances; for both of us desired it in general, and pursued it in particular, only we could not join in the manner: and it was a perfect scene of confusion to see how religion was carried on among us; the servants were some papists, some protestants, some pagans, for we had three East Indian blacks and one negro among our people; the Christian servants were every now and then together by the ears about persuading the negro to turn Christian, and be baptized, but could not bear to think what sort of Christian the poor creature should be; one of our men, an Italian, would have him be a papist, and the other would have him to be a protestant; and the poor negro was so confounded, between them, that he could not tell what to do. The negro was a sensible, inquisitive fellow, and had, by mere asking questions on both sides, gotten a great deal of knowledge of religion, but was merely stopped in his

search after further particulars by the impertinent quarrels of those servants who pretended to instruct him: both told him he must believe a God, a future state, a heaven, a hell, a resurrection to life or to death, and that he must be saved by a Redeemer; they agreed exactly in their description of the joys of eternal life, the torments of hell, and particularly they had joined in giving the poor negro a frightful apprehension of hell, as the reward of his doing wickedly, and of the Devil, as a tempter, an enemy, and tormentor; so that the poor fellow would pray to God very heartily to save him from hell, and to keep him from the Devil.

But when these poor ignorant fellows began to instruct him how to worship God, and who to look to as his Redeemer and Saviour, to talk to him about reading the Scriptures, and such things, they fell out to the last degree; the English footman told the Italian he was an idolator, and that was worse than a heathen, that Negum (for so the poor negro was called) was as good a Christian as he, for though he did not worship in the name of Christ, yet as he (the Italian footman) worshipped a piece of wood for a Saviour, Christ would not accept him, and it was as bad as Negum's worshipping a hobgoblin, or anything else. The Italian told him he was a heretic, and his religion was no religion at all; and that he was an enemy to God and to the church; and told Negum that if he believed what that fellow said, the Devil would take him away alive. They had many quarrels about it; but one day above the rest they came to that height that they fell to fighting: it seems the rest of the servants had parted them before their master or I heard of it; but as we were both walking together in the evening in our garden, we by mere chance saw the negro in the kitchen garden

crying; his master saw him first, and called him to us; and the fellow came with a book in his hand, but terribly afraid his master should be angry.

What's the matter, Negum? says his master; and so they began to talk.

Neg. No muchee matter, no muchee.

Ma. Why you were crying, Negum: what did you cry about? has any body beat you?

Neg. No muchee cry, no beatee me.

Ma. What then, Negum? what book have you got there?

Neg. Indeedee me no go away, sir; (*kneels down*) me no go, me be a Christian, no indeedee.

(*The fellow, it seems, was afraid his master would think, if he turned Christian, he would be baptized, and so think himself free; and he kneeled down to his master to beg him not to be angry.*)

Ma. Well, well, thou shalt be a Christian, Negum, if thou hast a mind to it; God forbid anybody should hinder thee: what book's that?

Neg. Bible book; me readee this book to be Christian.

Ma. Who gave you that book to read?

Neg. Augustino.

Ma. Let me see it.

(*He looked in the book, and saw it was an Italian missal, or psalter.*)

Neg. Me have other Bible book too.

(*He pulls another book out.*)

Ma. Let's see that too.

(*His master looked in that too, and found it was an English Bible.*)

Ma. Who gave you this too?

Neg. William.

Ma. Well, you understand the languages, read

them both: but, poor fellow, thou hast got but two sorry teachers.

When he gave the books back to him, and bid him read them both, he turned to me, My dear, says he, these fellows pretend to instruct this poor negro in the Christian religion, when they can't agree about it themselves, I am sure. Upon which Negum makes his master a bow, and puts in his word.

Neg. No, indeedee, they no agree; they fightee just now about teachee me.

Ma. What, did they fight?

Neg. Yes, indeedee, they fightee just now: they no teachee me; one say me go to the Devil, t'other say me go to the Devil; they no teachee me to go away from the Devil, they make me no know what I do.

Ma. And was that it you cried about, Negum?

Neg. Yes, indeedee, me cry to go to the Devil! me would go away from the Devil.

Ma. You must pray to God to keep you from the Devil.

Neg. Yes, indeedee, me do pray God to keep away the Devil.

Ma. You must pray to God to teach you too.

Neg. God teachee me! no, Augustin teachee me! no, William teachee me! God teachee me, how that?

Here my spouse found how the case stood, and turning to me, My dear, says he, these fellows quarrel continually about this poor man, and so in the end he will be brought rather to abhor the Christian religion in general, than to turn Christian at all, while one pulls him one way and one another;

now what course must you and I take? I cannot pretend to desire him to be made a protestant, I am sure you won't desire him to be a catholic; and so the poor fellow must be lost. I told him it was a critical case, in which I knew not how to act; but as they were his servants in particular, and that he brought his negro out of Italy with him, I thought they were to be at his disposal and direction rather than mine. My dear, says he, there is nothing mine but what is yours; don't shift it off so, but tell me what I shall do? I confess I trembled when he said so, for I was afraid some debate would fall in between us in consequence of the case; however I answered him thus: My dear, you determined before for me, what you might be sure would be my thoughts: but what can I determine about your servants? Well, my dear, says he, I'll do as Solomon did in the case of dividing the child, I'll show you that I am the truest lover of his soul, I mean of us two; for rather than he should not be taught to worship God at all, let him be taught the way of the country where we are; if we divide, as our two men have done, he will not be taught at all.

Upon this principle he acted, and consented I should act in it as I saw cause; upon which I sent the negro down to a country tenant we have in Essex, upon pretence to learn to plough and sow, and do country work, and there I kept him near a twelvemonth; at the same time, the farmer being a very sober, religious man, and having a hint from me what to do, this poor negro is become a very sensible, religious fellow, has been baptized now two years ago, and I think verily is an excellent Christian.

Sist. And did he run away, or claim his freedom upon his being baptized?

Wid. No, not he; but I gave him his freedom

when his master died, and gave him wages, and he is an extraordinary servant, I assure you.

Sist. Your husband strained a point of religion there, I assure you.

Wid. Why you see what principle he did it from; he saw the fellow was in a protestant country, and would either be a protestant at last, or nothing at all; and he rather chose he should be a protestant, than remain a heathen, or lose all desire of being a Christian; For, says he, God can enlighten him further, by a miracle, when he pleases; and the having been taught the general notions of religion, he would be the easier brought to embrace the true church; but if he continues a heathen, he will have no knowledge at all.

Eld. Sist. I believe you would not have shown the same charity for his church.

Wid. I confess I did not show so much zeal for the soul of the poor negro, as I think I ought to have done, or so much charity as he did; but had other thoughts at that time to take me up: however, sister, to bring this back to the first discourse, you see by this how fatal in a family, difference in principles is within the same house; and had he not been biassed by an extraordinary temper, as well as by an uncommon charity, we had been the most miserable couple on earth: so that, in short, there is not one part of a woman's life in such a circumstance that is not dreadfully embarrassed, if she has any sense of her own principles, or her husband any sense of his.

Yo. Sist. But do you think then, that there may be a case of some kind or other, in which a man and a woman may be happy together, though there be a difference in opinions?

Wid. No indeed, I do not think there is: I do

not think you can name a case in which it is possible to say with truth, that they can be happy; that is, that there is not some interruption to their happiness on that very account.

Yo. Sist. That is, supposing them to be both religiously inclined.

Wid. Nay, that need not be supposed; for we go upon our mother's principle, that without a religious family there can be no happiness of life: if they are, as I said before, indifferent about religion, then there is no happiness at all in our sense of felicity; and if they place their happiness in pursuing their duty, as every true Christian must, there must be some of that happiness wanting, where they cannot worship God together, and go hand in hand to heaven.

Yo. Sist. You know, sister, I was always of that mind; but I am exceedingly confirmed in it by your experience.

Wid. You were happy in your early cleaving to this principle, and I miserable in neglecting it; may both our examples be directing to those that come after us!

Fa. Come, children, blessed be God for the experience of both: let us end this discourse, for it makes me melancholy, that have had a very unhappy part in both your cases: in yours my dear, (*speaking to the youngest,*) I violently endeavoured to force you to be miserable; and in yours, my dear, (*speaking to the other,*) I entirely omitted the concern I ought to have had upon me, to prevent your making yourself so.

Sist. Do not afflict yourself, sir, about that now; blessed be God we have both got it over.

Fa. But it does afflict me for all that; and let all fathers learn from me, how much it concerns them, if they wish well to their children, either to

their souls or bodies, to establish religious families in their posterity, and to prevent their children marrying, if possible, either where there is no religion, or no agreement in opinion about it; for in either case they are sure to be made miserable.

The end of the second part.

APPENDIX.

PART III.

In the latter part of the last discourse we left the aunt and the widow sister, who had married the Roman catholic gentleman, entering upon a discourse about the inconveniences of entertaining irreligious servants; and also of entertaining of servants of differing persuasions and opinions in religion one from another, or of differing opinions from the family they served in. The ladies put off the discourse of that affair for another time, the aunt being willing to enter into a more particular conversation about it. This caused several very entertaining discourses among them at several times, some of which, I hope, may be useful to be made public for the direction of other families, and for the encouragement of all masters or mistresses of families, who desire to promote good government and religious things among their children and servants; and particularly in such a time as this, when it is known that servants are less apt to submit to family regulations, and good household government, than ever.

The two ladies being at their aunt's house, which was at Hampstead, as I have observed, their aunt had a little squabble with one of her maids upon the following occasion: the maid had, it seems,

been out in the afternoon of a Sabbath-day, and stayed longer than the usual time of being at church; and her lady, who otherwise had known nothing of it, happened, unluckily for the wench, to be just in the way when she came in; that is to say, the lady chancing to go down the back stairs, which was not ordinary for her to do, meets her maid dressed in her best clothes, and just going up to undress herself; and this rencounter between the mistress and the maid produced the following dialogue.

DIALOGUE I.

Lady. Ha! Mary, says the lady, not undressed yet!

Mary. I shall be ready presently, madam.

La. But how come you to be so fine at this time of day? I suppose you are but just come in, Mary?

Ma. Yes, madam, I have been come in a good while.

La. What do you call a good while, Mary?

Ma. A great while, madam.

La. Must not I know how long, Mary?

Ma. Yes, madam, if you please; but you don't use to inquire into such trifles; I hope I have not been wanted.

La. It would have been a trifle, Mary, if it had been of another day; but it being on the Sabbath-day, Mary, makes the case differ extremely: I hope you were at church, Mary?

Ma. Yes, madam, to be sure.

La. At our church, Mary? I think I did not see you there.

Ma. No, madam, indeed I was not there; I hope 'tis all one if I was at another church?

La. No, Mary, it is not all one, because I cannot be sure that you were at any church at all.

Ma. You may take my word, madam, for that, for once, I hope.

La. I cannot say, Mary, that 'tis so much to my satisfaction to take your word for it, as it would have been to see you at church myself.

Ma. I am sorry, madam, you should be uneasy at those things; I hope I do your business to your content; and as to going to church, I hope I may be at liberty to go to what church I like best.

La. Why yes, Mary, I am willing to allow liberty of conscience, but then it is upon condition that it is really a conscientious liberty; 'tis not my question what church you go to, if I am satisfied you were at church at all; but how shall I be sure of that, Mary?

Ma. 'Tis not worth your inquiry, madam; those things are trifles below a mistress to trouble herself with.

La. No, Mary, you are much mistaken there; I think I am obliged to inquire whether my servants go to church or no; and how they spend their time o' Sabbath-days: besides, Mary, 'tis a great while since church was done, and I find you are but just come home; I desire to have some little account where you have been.

Ma. I am not ashamed to tell where I have been, madam; I have been doing no harm; I have been taking a walk, madam; I work hard enough all the week; I think I may take a little pleasure o' Sundays.

La. Well, Mary, so you have been walking in the fields, and taking your pleasure to-day?

Ma. Yes, madam; I hope there is no offence in it; I think you said I have not been wanted.

La. Well, but just now you said you had been at church, Mary.

Ma. Why, that's true, madam; I was at Highgate church-door, but I did not go in, that's true; I did not think you would have troubled yourself to examine such trifles so very particularly.

La. You and I differ very much about the thing itself; I do not think 'tis a trifling thing at all, Mary, whether my servants spend the Sabbath-day at church, or in taking their pleasure.

Ma. I work very hard, madam, all the week.

La. What's that to keeping the Sabbath-day, Mary?

Ma. Why, madam, sure I may take a little pleasure o' Sundays; I have no other time; I am sure you give your servants no time for diversion.

La. Did I ever refuse you, Mary, when you asked me for a day for yourself?

Ma. I never troubled you much with asking.

La. I had rather you had, Mary, than take God's time for yourself.

Ma. God's time, madam; all our time is God's time, I think.

La. Yes, Mary; but some time he has appointed for religion, Mary.

Ma. Religion! O dear! indeed, madam, I don't trouble myself about religion, not I.

La. So I find, Mary, and am sorry for it.

Ma. O madam, you have religion enough for us all: what can I do?

La. Don't make a jest of it, Mary, I am not jesting with you.

Ma. I think you are, madam, when you talk to me of religion; I don't understand it; what can I say to it?

La. You can go to church, Mary, can't you?

Ma. Yes, madam, so I do sometimes.

La. And don't you every Sunday?

Ma. No indeed, madam, not I; 'tis a folly to lie.

La. I am sorry for it, Mary; I assure you, they that live with me shall go to church every Sunday, or I shall not desire their service.

Ma. You never made that bargain, madam, when you hired me.

La. Well, Mary, then I make it now; for they shall not serve me all the week, that make my work an excuse for not serving God on Sunday; I should think it would bring a curse upon my work, and upon my whole family.

Ma. As you please for that, madam.

La. No, Mary, it must be as you please, it seems, for you know my conditions now, and I expect you will observe them, or remove.

(*Here her mistress left her, seeing she began to talk a little saucily, and she had no mind to vex herself, or put herself in any passion with her.*)

The wench, a little heated with the reproof her lady had given her, and vexed that she was caught, for she did not expect to see her mistress on the back stairs, went up and undressed herself, and hearing another of the maids in the next room, she goes to her, and there gives a full vent to her passion; railing heartily at her mistress, and at religion, and at everything that came in her way. The following discourse will give some part of their talk: she knocks at the door, and calls to her fellow-servant thus: Betty, open the door, I want to speak to you: so Betty let her in, and she begins.

Ma. I suppose you have heard what a lecture I have had, ha'n't you, Betty?

Betty. No, not I: who have you had a lecture from?

Ma. Nay, nobody but my mistress: I wonder what business she had upon the back-stairs.

Bet. Back stairs! why did you meet my mistress upon the back stairs?

Ma. Ay, ay, I met her there; or rather she met me there, as ill luck would have it; for I was but just come in, and was coming up to undress me, but she caught me; I would I had been a mile off.

Bet. Why what did she say to you? was she angry?

Ma. Ay, ay, angry! I never had such a rattle from her since I came into the house.

Bet. What was the matter? what was it for?

Ma. For! for nothing, I think; but forsooth she would needs know where I had been, and whether I had been at church, or no: what has she to do with it, whether I go to church or no? 'tis nothing to her.

Bet. O that was only because you was but just come in, and it was so long past church-time, I suppose, that made her suspect you.

Ma. Suspect me! what do you mean by that? I do nothing to be suspected, not I.

Bet. I don't say you do; I say that made her suspect you had not been at church.

Ma. Well, she need not trouble her head with her suspicions of me; I told her I had not been at church; I told her I had been taking a walk with a friend as far as Highgate.

Bet. Did you? that's more than I dare do; if I make a slip now and then, I am in such a hurry to get back just as church is done, that it takes away the pleasure of it.

Ma. I don't trouble my head with it; if I have a mind to take a walk, as long as she don't want me, what need she trouble herself; I shan't be so much

afraid of her, not I; as long as it is only o' Sunday, and my work is done too.

Bet. But then I can assure you my mistress and you will not agree long together; for if she knows it, she won't keep you an hour.

Ma. Nay, she may do as she will for that; I told her plainly where I went, and that I thought she had nothing to do with it.

Bet. Did you so, Mary? Then I suppose she told you her mind?

Ma. Ay, ay, and I told her my mind too; I won't be tied up to her religious trumpery, not I; if I do her work, what has she to do with what religion I am of, or whether I have any religion or no? 'tis no business of hers.

Bet. No, Mary, I cannot go that length neither: I think my mistress may concern herself with that; for if she is religious herself, she may desire to have her servants be so too; and therefore if I do make a breach sometimes, I always do it so as not to be found out: and I have such good luck, that my mistress has never caught me yet.

Ma. Well, she has caught me; and if it be a fine day next Sunday, she shall catch me again, if she has a mind to it; I won't be tied to go to church but when I please; I love liberty: besides, this is about religion, Betty, and, so 'tis liberty of conscience; you know I love liberty of conscience, Betty.

Bet. You are witty upon it, Mary: pray what do you call liberty of conscience?

Ma. What! that I should have liberty to go to church, or not go to church, as I think fit, and when I please: is not that liberty of conscience?

Bet. No, Mary, I think that is liberty without conscience, for 'tis a liberty in what we should not do; that can never be liberty of conscience, Mary.

Ma. Well, well; then let it be liberty without

conscience; 'tis the liberty I love; and I see no harm in it: why you acknowledge you do so yourself, don't you?

Bet. That's true, so I do sometimes; but I cannot say 'tis as it should be; I cannot say as you do, that there is no harm in it; 'tis a fault, I know that; and I don't do it very often; and when I do, as I told you, I take care not to have it known.

Ma. Very well, then you are worse than I; for you believe it is a fault, and yet do it; now I don't think 'tis a fault at all; if I did, it may be I would not do it.

Bet. I don't believe you can say with a safe conscience that there is no harm in it; you only are hardened a little more than I.

Ma. It may be so; and you are even with me, for you are a little more of a hypocrite than I, and for aught I see, that's all the difference between us.

Bet. Truly, Mary, your reproof is bitter: but perhaps 'tis too true; and I shall learn so much from you, that I shall take more care how I do again what my own conscience convinces me is a fault.

Ma. Well, and I may go on, because I have more impudence than you, I suppose that's what you mean?

Bet. I do not say so; I believe you know 'tis a fault as well as I do, but you are a little more used to those things, it may be, than I have been.

Ma. I am as I was bred, and so, it may be, are you; I was never taught to lay much stress upon these things, and so I never trouble myself about them.

Bet. Well, Mary, I am glad you think I have been taught better.

Ma. Why, as well as you have been taught, I find you can take a walk in the fields o' Sunday as well as I.

Bet. But I tell you again, I don't do it and think there's no harm in it, as you do; and you have touched me so home with your reproof, that I resolve never to do so again while I live.

Ma. But what's all this to my mistress and me? what has she to do with it?

Bet. Why Mary, my mistress is a very pious, religious lady, and she thinks herself bound to call her servants to an account how they spend their time.

Ma. Ay, so she may for all the week-days, for that's her time; but Sunday is my own, she has nothing to do with that.

Bet. I assure you my mistress will not allow that doctrine; she thinks she has as much to do with you on Sunday as any other day.

Ma. You talk of my mistress being a religious lady, why so she may be, for aught I know; and I think we have so much religion at home, we need not go abroad for it: does not the chaplain tease us twice a day with his long prayers, and reading of chapters? I am sure he has made me neglect my business many times to come to prayers: but I give them the slip sometimes, and if I did not, they would have many a good dish of meat spoiled, so they would.

Bet. You are a merry girl, Mary, when you talk of religion.

Ma. Nay, I don't understand it; I know nothing of the matter; I come to do my business, and mind the kitchen; if their dinners are not well dished up, they may find fault, and I should take some care to mend it; but to talk to me about religion, 'tis time enough hereafter; let them let me alone to myself.

Bet. But my mistress will satisfy you that she is obliged, while she keeps you for a servant, to see that you serve God as well as you serve her.

Ma. O dear! let them serve God themselves better first; I don't see that any of them have any

more regard to their prayers and their chapters than I have that stay away, but only for form sake, and it may be for the credit of employing a chaplain.

Bet. Nay, do not say so neither; I can assure you my mistress is a very pious, religious lady, and you cannot say otherwise, I am sure; and so are all the young ladies too, they are like her.

Ma. It may be so; and yet I have seen them all asleep at prayers, many a time, when I am sure they had not so much more need to be sleepy than I had that work hard, nor so much neither.

Bet. Sometimes they may be heavy, but that is not often; and I suppose you cannot say they were ever all asleep together.

Ma. 'Tis no matter for that, they do the same at church; and pray what's the difference between my going into the fields to take my pleasure on Sundays and their going to church to take their ease? between my washing my dishes, while the chaplain is at prayers, and their being fast asleep at prayers?

Bet. Why, Moll, thou art very malicious to take notice of such things, and they are faults to be sure; but there is a vast difference in them too.

Ma. As how, pray?

Bet. Why thus: that though they may sometimes drop asleep, 'tis not always: and they do it but seldom. You, it seems, make the other a practice, and do it always; then if they do sleep sometimes at church or at prayers, they don't pretend to say there is no harm in it, they must acknowledge they ought not to do so; but you have the impudence to say, when you spend your time in the fields, or perhaps worse, there is no harm in it. Now there's a great deal of difference between doing a thing which they acknowledge to be wrong, and doing what is really wrong, and justifying it as if it was right.

Ma. Well, let them do what they will, and let me

do what I will; I don't meddle with them, let them let me alone, can't they?

Bet. But it may be, my mistress thinks she ought to govern her servants in religious things, as well as in her house affairs.

Ma. Why let her think what she will, and do what she will, I will have my own way, I shall mind nothing they say to me.

Bet. That's none of my business, Mary; you must do as you will.

Ma. No; and it is none of her business neither, I think.

Bet. I can't say that, Mary; I think if you were a mistress, and kept a great many servants, as our mistress does, you would talk otherwise, and do otherwise too, or else you would soon have a house full of whores and rogues.

Ma. I don't know what I would do then, nor do I trouble my head with it; for I am never like to be tried with it: but if I was a housekeeper, and kept maids, I would take care they should do my business, and that would keep them from making such a disorderly house as you speak of; as for their religion, I should not trouble myself about it.

Bet. Well, but I would trouble myself about that too, I assure you, if I were a mistress.

Ma. Why what would you do?

Bet. Why, if I had a chaplain, or a husband that kept up good orders in his house, I would take care my servants should always attend at prayers; and on Sundays I would take care they should all go to church, and come home again too when church was done.

Ma. You would! and if I was your maid you would make me come in to prayers every night and morning, would you?

Bet. Yes, I would, or you should not live with me.

Ma. Well, and if I did come in, I should only laugh at you all when I did, and make a jest of your chaplain or your husband, and so would other servants too: don't you see we do so here? an't we always making sport at our poor dull thing called a chaplain?

Bet. Yes, I can't say but I see it, but I never join with you in it; for I think there's no jest at all in it: and as for the poor good man himself, I know he sees it, and 'tis a great trouble and discouragement to him.

Ma. Why what is such a fellow good for, but to be gamed and made sport with? does he think we take him for anything but a religious merry-andrew?

Bet. You must think, however, my mistress takes him otherwise, and thinks it her duty to keep him, and to have good orders in her house; and it does not become us that are servants to mock at such things. No master or mistress that knew their servants mocked at God's worship in their house, ought to keep those servants an hour longer in their families.

Ma. And you would make me come to church if I was your cook, would you, Betty?

Bet. No, I don't say I would make you go to church, but you should either go to God's worship, or go about your business.

Ma. Well, but what if I were a dissenter, and did not like your way, or did not care to go to church? Or what if you were a dissenter, and I did not like to go to the meeting-house?

Bet. Why truly, Mary, in general, I say if that were the real case, I would not restrain you, provided I was satisfied you went but somewhere; but your dispute with my mistress is between going somewhere and nowhere; not between serving God

in this manner or that manner, but between serving God some way or other, and serving him no way at all; and that alters the case mightily.

Ma. But as to the matter of coming to prayers at home, it would be the same thing; for if I were a church woman, and my mistress a dissenter; or I a dissenter, and my mistress of the church; a quaker, and my mistress a Roman catholic; or my mistress a quaker, and I a Roman catholic, it would be all the same thing; there would be the same dislike and contempt of what was done in the house; I should no more like the crosses and the masses of the papists, the yea and nay of the quakers, and the reading prayers of the church, or extempore prayers of the presbyterians, if I was of the other opinion, than I like now any of them while I declare I understand none of them; and so all their family doings would be but a jest to me, and I'll make a jest of them.

Bet. Why this is too true; and therefore I must own, that if I were mistress of a house, I would always have my servants go to the same place, to serve God, as I did myself, or I would not keep them; whether I went to the church, the meeting-house, to the quaker's meeting, or to the mass-house.

Ma. And what would you be the better? they would but make a jest of you still; they would be not the more of your opinion for forcing them to go where you went.

Bet. You mistake me much; I mean, they should be such as by choice went to worship so before they came to me, and that declared their opinion to be so when I hired them; for otherwise, I grant, that compelling them afterwards would be nothing at all, or perhaps worse than the other.

Ma. And what if an honest, plain wench, like me,

came to be hired, that knows nothing at all of religion, and troubled not herself about it?

Bet. Why, such a one, when I asked her whether she went to this or that place, would say yes to any of them, as I happened to be myself, and so I might be deceived.

Ma. Well, and what would you do then, when you found her out, and met her on the back stairs, Bess, as my mistress has done by me?

Bet. Why I should do just as my mistress has done with you, inquire about it, and when I found you a reprobate, profane wench, and a saucy one too, as it seems you acknowledge you have shown yourself to-day, I should even give you warning to mend your manners, or provide yourself, as it seems my mistress has done too.

Ma. A pretty story! so I am come to make my complaint to you to a fine purpose: it seems you think me in the wrong all the way.

Bet. Indeed so I do.

Ma. And what if I had come to you to be hired, and you had asked my opinion about religion, and I had answered you that I had not had many thoughts about it; that all opinions were alike to me; that when I did go anywhere, I would go where you would have me go, and the like?

Bet. Why Mary, I must own I should not like it at all; neither, I believe, should I hire you at all; I should be afraid to take such a stupid despiser of God and religion into my house; you should even go without a mistress of me.

Ma. Well, and you might go without a servant too of me; for I can tell you, there are mistresses enough in the world that never ask the question either before or after, nor care whether their servants serve God or the Devil.

Bet. Ay, Mary, and that is one reason why so many of us servants are of the same kind.

Ma. Well, well, I don't doubt, however, but I shall get a place among them, and not be questioned about going to church; I go to service to work, not to learn my catechism; I understand my cookery, what is it to them whether I understand religion or no?

Bet. Why look you, Mary, I don't learn my catechism any more than you, and yet I do not like my mistress the worse, I assure you, for taking care that her servants should go to church, and not caring to keep those that are despisers of religion. I think 'tis pity any lady that is religious should not have religious servants about her.

They had another dialogue upon this subject afterwards; but it had too much passion in it to merit a place in this account; for the case was this; Betty gave her lady an account of some part of Mary's discourse, particularly that of making a jest of her chaplain, and of calling the family to prayers; upon which her mistress turned her out of her house, giving her a month's wages instead of a month's warning, as one not fit to be allowed to stay in the family; and Mary fell upon her fellow-servant for that part in a great rage. Betty told her in so many words, she thought herself obliged to mention it, though it was not till her mistress having heard that they had discoursed it together, made her promise to give her a full account of all that had passed between them; and if she had not done it faithfully, her mistress would have put them both away together.

These two short dialogues or disputes about the maid's rambling on the Sabbath-day, was the reason why the young lady's aunt was willing to discourse again with her niece upon that subject; and accordingly, meeting together some time after, they

renewed their discourse about servants in the following manner:

Aunt. I think, niece, when you and I talked last, we were upon the subject of taking religious servants; I want to hear what you have to say upon that head; for I think there is really much more in it than most people imagine.

Niece. Truly, madam, it is what I lay great stress upon; and though I have not had much occasion to complain in the few years I have kept house, yet I have seen so much of it in my mother's time, and since that in other families, and a little in my own, that I am resolved what shift I make I will have no servants but such as at least have a common reverence for religion, and for religious persons in a family. To be sure I will never have any scoffers and mockers of religion, if I can help it.

Aunt. As the world goes now, child, it will be very hard to find such; for religion is so much made a jest of among masters, that it is hard to find any servants that do not jest at it too, and mock and slight all those that have any regard to it.

Niece. That's my case, madam, exactly; but there is another mischief in it too.

Aunt. Another mischief, child! there are innumerable family mischiefs in it.

Niece. I believe so, madam. But this is one particular case, and which I have the greater reason to take notice of, because a certain lady, an acquaintance and neighbour of mine, has had a great deal of that kind, and indeed in a particular manner, with her servants.

Aunt. What lady is that? pray do I know her?

Niece. You had some discourse with her, madam, if I remember right, the last time you did me the favour to dine with me.

Aunt. I remember it very well, and we talked a

little upon that very subject; I mean, how rude and insolent servants were grown at this time; but I think we had not much talk of their being irreligious and profane.

Niece. Madam, she had a servant whom they called her woman, for she was one to whom she intrusted everything, and who was like a housekeeper, and all the servants were as it were under her; she was a very good sort of a body indeed in the house, and as that lady, if you remember, was very lame, she could not stir about to look much after her servants herself, and trusted all to this woman.

She was a sensible woman, had the knowledge of almost everything in the world, and talked admirable well, had a world of wit and humour, very mannerly and well-behaved, sober, and modest enough; in short, she was an excellent servant.

Aunt. You give her an extraordinary character, niece, I assure you.

Niece. In a word, madam, she had everything about her that could be desired in a servant, but religion; and of that she was as entirely empty as you can imagine it possible for any creature in the world to be, and that had ever heard of God or Devil, or had lived among Christians.

Aunt. Nay, niece, you say she was not an ignorant body.

Niece. No, indeed, madam, she was so far from being ignorant that she was able to deceive anybody; she would talk of religious things as well, and argue upon them strongly enough to delude anybody: and this made it the worse, for she was such a human devil, that she made use of a fluent tongue, and of an uncommon wit, not to talk irreligiously only, but to mock and make a jest of religion in general, and of all those that had any regard for it.

Aunt. She was a dangerous body, indeed! pray

was she a maid or a wife? for she is not very young, it seems.

Niece. She had never been married, madam, but I think was engaged to a man whom my spouse sent to Italy, and they are to be married when he comes back.

Aunt. You say she is a sober woman?

Niece. Yes, madam, I dare say she is; but her wicked, profane, and atheistical behaviour is enough to poison a whole family.

Aunt. But why does the lady, your friend, entertain such a one in her house?

Niece. She has such a subtlety in her conduct, and behaves so cunningly, that her mistress does not perceive it, at least she does not think her so bad as she is.

Aunt. But what says her husband to it? does he know it?

Niece. Yes, madam, he knows more of it than she does, for the men-servants tell him of it, and give him a particular account sometimes of passages which they observe.

Aunt. Perhaps he don't trouble himself about it: for the men do not often value these things.

Niece. Indeed, madam, just the contrary; for he is a very sober, religious gentleman, and keeps very good order in his house, and 'tis a very great disturbance to him.

Aunt. And has he spoken of it to his wife?

Niece. Yes, madam, he has very often, and told her such particulars as are very essential to the good of the family, and such too as almost carry their own evidence with them.

Aunt. And what does she say?

Niece. I know not indeed how she manages, but I know that her husband and she have had more words about it than about all other matters put to-

gether since they were married; and sometimes it grows high, and they are very warm, and even angry about it.

Aunt. Why she seems to be a good sensible religious lady: how can she take such a creature's part, especially against her husband?

Niece. Why first of all she pretends that she does not believe it, that the other servants rival her the favour she receives, and her mistress's particular kindnesses, and do it out of a malicious design; then she says she has examined her, and finds she clears herself of much of the charge, and makes the rest to appear trifling, and not worth notice.

Aunt. But perhaps, niece, it really may be so too, and the other servants may make things worse than they are, for the reasons you mention.

Niece. But, madam, it is otherwise in fact; for the truth is, this wench, or woman, manages all the servants so effectually, that, in short, if any of them are religiously inclined when they come, she makes them ashamed to be so when they come to her; for she makes a mock of religion, and such a jest of going to church, or going to prayers in the family, that she laughs them out of their religion, and, in a word, they all turn reprobates like herself.

Aunt. But can this be, and her lady not know or hear of it?

Niece. Yes, very well, madam; for, as I told you, she is an excellent servant, and the more her mistress is loath to part with her the harder she is to believe these things of her.

Aunt. But, niece, her husband, you say, knows it; sure she will believe him.

Niece. But she alleges he knows it but by hearsay from the rest of the servants, who, she says, hate her, and therefore falsely accuse her.

Aunt. But does he know nothing from his own knowledge?

Niece. Yes, madam, he knows too much; for the unwary creature let him overhear her one evening making her jeers of, and flout at him, to some of the servants, but behind his back, for his calling them all to prayers; and not only so, but at some expressions which he had used some time or other, which she pretended were nonsense, and others trifling, and the like, as the redundancy of her wit gave her room to banter.

Aunt. That was very unhappy, indeed, and the worse that he should know it too.

Niece. So it was, madam, for it made the poor gentleman decline performing his duty for some time, and made a very great breach between him and his lady, which is hardly quite made up yet.

Aunt. Why so, pray?

Niece. Why, madam, she wanted to have him continue to go on with his duty, and to pray in the family as he used to do. He declared he could not do it while that creature was to be there; that it was a restraint to him, and he could not perform when he knew there was one in the place who made a scoff and jeer at him for it. She alleged he ought to perform his duty for all that; and that it was a piece of the Devil's craft, contrived to interrupt the worship of God in his family, and that he ought to disregard it entirely.

Aunt. Well, I think he was very much in the wrong in that part, for he certainly ought not to have omitted his duty upon so mean an objection as that.

Niece. That is true, and he owned it; but said it was a difficulty upon him, a restraint to him in the performance of his duty, and that she ought to remove it from him.

Aunt. He ought to have considered, that the less of religion was to be found in his servants, the more reason he had to pray for them, and with them; that he might perhaps be the occasion of good to them, and of bringing them to the knowledge and love of religion, which would be an advantage he ought to be thankful for, and think it a blessing to his house if it happened so.

Niece. She did argue just so to him, madam: but he returned it so strong upon her, that she ought, as far as lay in her, to remove every difficulty that lay in the way of his duty; that it was much more forcible as to her; for he told her, that if she granted that the difficulty was a snare laid in his way by the Devil, she ought, at the same time that she told him it was his duty to resist it, to do all she could possible, or that lay in her power, to remove the occasion; otherwise she made herself accessary to the temptation, and assistant to the Devil, in laying a snare for her husband, and much of the sin would lie at her door.

Aunt. There was a great deal in that, I confess; and I think she ought to have yielded immediately. Pray what did she say to it?

Niece. She insisted that the charge was false; that her woman denied it, and, as I said before, that it was a malicious design of the other servants; but in short, the business was, that she was very loath to part with her woman, who, as I said before, was a very good servant, and useful to her divers ways.

Aunt. But you said that he heard something of it himself. Surely she would believe him then.

Niece. Why she could say nothing to that indeed; but she put it off as well as she could, with telling him she would tell her woman of it, and take care she should do so no more.

Aunt. That seemed to be trifling, because it was in a matter of such consequence, as ought not to be trifled with.

Niece. It was so: but he went yet further; he entreated her, he begged of her to take away a thing so irksome from him, and which was so much a hinderance to his duty: he told her, that had her servant been a mere ignorant, untaught creature, he should have had no difficulty upon him, but rather it would be an encouragement to do his duty, in hopes of being an instrument of opening her eyes: but for a mocker at religion, and one that not only despised religion itself, but mocked at others for it, this made the case differ exceedingly, and he knew not how to get over it.

Aunt. And would not such arguments as those move her?

Niece. Truly, not so much as they should have done.

Aunt. And pray what was the consequence of it?

Niece. Truly, madam, the consequences were bad many ways: for, first, it kept the lady and her husband in very ill terms with one another for near two years: and, secondly, that unhappy creature bantered all the other servants of the family out of the little religion they had, and indeed made them all like herself.

Aunt. And where did it end?

Niece. Why, madam, besides this, it broke and put an end to all good order, and to the worship of God in the family; I mean to all family worship.

Aunt. What dreadful work was that! What, and does it continue so still?

Niece. No, madam. Her husband, who is a very religious gentleman, could not content himself with living in that manner with his family, and not being

able to prevail with his wife to part with her woman, he took so much upon him as to force her out of the house, that is to say, he put away the whole set of servants in the family, (for they were all made alike at last,) and took all new people at once.

Aunt. And how did the lady take it?

Niece. Truly, madam, I cannot say she took it so well as I wish, for her sake, she had: for though her husband and she are very religious, sober, and good people, yet I cannot but say it has broken in very much upon their tempers and affection one to another, and there is not all the harmony between them that there used to be.

Aunt. And all along of one graceless, irreligious servant.

Niece. 'Tis very true, madam.

Aunt. Besides, as you say, ruining the morals of the rest of the servants.

Niece. Yes, madam.

Aunt. Pray how did that appear among them?

Niece. Why, madam, in the first place, she made all religious things her jest; turned all that was said to them at church, or in the family, that had anything serious in it, into banter and ridicule, and laughed them out of everything that looked like religion. She represented religion to be a mere piece of state policy and priestcraft, contrived between the clergy and the statesmen, only to snbject the world to their management. The ministers and servants of Jesus Christ set apart for the altar, and whose business it is to preach salvation to a lost world, by a glorious but crucified Redeemer, she despised with the lowest or last degree of contempt, calling them mercenaries and tradesmen, the church their idol, and the pulpit their shop, where they sold what they called the word of God to who bid most; and such-like horrid and blasphemous stuff.

When the honest servants would have gone to church with their master and mistress, she would carry them away into the fields, or to make some visit or other, and continually turn them off from what was religious to something of levity and diversion, as a more suitable work for the Sabbath-day; and still, when she had brought them to break in upon conscience, and to profane the Sabbath-day, she would fall foul of religion for laying the burden of rules upon the liberties of the world; and all she did or said was with a great deal of wit, and, by way of sarcasm, as sharp and as clean as if she had been a philosopher, or a doctor in theology.

Aunt. She was the more dangerous.

Niece. She was so indeed, for she had a tongue of a siren; 'twas neatly hung, but hellishly employed, for she delighted in making everybody as bad as herself.

Aunt. Your story is so very good, let me tell you another.

Niece. I should be glad to hear it, madam. But if you please to put it off till by and by; for I see your servant waits to speak with you.

(*She whispers her maid.*)

Aunt. She does so indeed; 'tis to call us to dinner. Well, we will talk again of this part; for I am very much of your opinion, niece, about taking no profane, irreligious servants, if you can help it.

The end of the first dialogue.

DIALOGUE II.

In the evening, the lady and her niece taking a walk in the garden, had a further conversation upon

the same subject, and the niece said to her aunt, which began the dialogue, Madam, when we left off our discourse in the morning, you were pleased to say, at the end of my story of an irreligious, profane wench, that my neighbour Mrs. —— had been troubled with, that you would tell me a story of another.

Aunt. I did so, child; it is of a family that lives at that house just over the way, in the back lane. (*She points to a house that could be seen over the garden wall.*) The people are dissenters; the gentlewoman is a very sober, religious, good sort of a person, indeed; and her husband is a very grave, religious man, also. They endeavour to take servants of their own persuasion as much as they can; but that is sometimes very difficult to do; and she has indeed had very bad luck that way. However, this gentlewoman, as she told me herself, having occasion to hire a maid-servant, I forgot whether she was cook or chambermaid, or what else, for they kept three or four: but after she had agreed in everything else, she asked her maid (that was to be) what religion she was of.

Madam, says the maid, blushing, (for she looked mighty sober,) that is a question I don't understand very well.

Why says the mistress, I hope you are a protestant? I don't mean whether you are a papist or no.

Yes, madam, says the maid, I think I am a protestant.

Nay, says the mistress, do you think so? but then, I doubt, you don't think much about it.

Not so much as I should do, madam, says the maid, and looked very simply and innocently at the discourse.

Niece. Not expecting, it may be, to be asked such questions.

Aunt. No, I believe not; for they are questions that I think none of us ask so much as we should do, when we hire servants.

Niece. Servants value themselves so much now, that they would take it as out of the way to be asked about these things.

Aunt. Well, if I have any servants, they shall all be asked such questions, and answer them too, or they shall be no servants to me.

Niece. I am of the same mind, madam, if I can possibly find servants that will submit to it.

Aunt. Child, if they won't submit before they are hired, to tell me what religion they are of, what are they like to submit to, after they are hired, about religion, or anything else?

Niece. Why really madam, I have had two or three that made a great deal of difficulty to do it, and thought it very much out of the way to have me ask them about it.

Aunt. And did you take them after that?

Niece. Why truly, yes, I did take two of them.

Aunt. And were they good for anything when you had them?

Niece. Indeed they were good for very little, I must confess.

Aunt. It may be possible indeed, that a wench may be a good servant, that is not a good Christian; but I must acknowledge it is but very seldom that it proves so; but when a good servant is a good Christian too, such a one is ten times the more valuable for a servant, as well as for her religion.

Niece. It is true, madam: but what shall we say, that some that are good Christians, are nevertheless not good servants; nay, there is a kind of a scandal upon those we call religious servants, that they are generally saucy, reserved, and value them-

selves too much upon it, always making conditions with you, and claiming times and liberties on account of religious affairs, which are neither proper for the work of religion, and perhaps not employed so, when granted.

Aunt. That brings me back to the story I was telling you, at least to one part of it.

Niece. I am sorry I interrupted it then. Pray madam, go on with it.

Aunt. I told you the gentlewoman my neighbour asked the wench about her religion, and how modestly she answered. However, her mistress put an end to that kind of discourse, and said, Look ye, sweetheart, I shall not catechise you too far; the question is, whether you have been bred to the church or the meeting-house? for I tell you beforehand, we are all dissenters, and go to the meeting.

Niece. That was too open, she might have first heard what the maid said of herself.

Aunt. No, no; she was willing to let her know first, and see what answer she would give to it, not doubting, but that if she gave an answer not founded upon principle, she should find it out.

Niece. Well, madam, perhaps she would be anything to get a good place.

Aunt. As to that, she made herself judge of it from her answer, which was very honest indeed, though not to her mistress's satisfaction at all.

Niece. Why madam, if it was honest, why should it not satisfy her mistress?

Aunt. 'Twas an answer which discovered the unhappy consequences of divided families, and shows much of the necessity of what we have had so many dialogues about, in the case of yourself and your sisters.

Niece. What about husbands and wives being of the same opinion, madam?

Aunt. Yes: she told her mistress that her father went to the meetings, and her mother went to the church.

Niece. What was that to the question of what religion or opinion she was?

Aunt. Yes, my dear, she asked her what she was bred to, and it was a proper answer.

Niece. That's true; and so between both, I suppose she was bred to be indifferent to either.

Aunt. No, my dear, 'twas worse than that; and her mistress took it immediately; for she turned pretty quick upon the wench; And so, sweetheart, says she, I suppose you were bred between them, and go neither to one or t'other.

Yes, madam, says the maid, sometimes I went to one, and sometimes to t'other.

And sometimes to neither, says the mistress.

My father and mother were poor people, madam, says she.

Poor people! says the mistress, what then, child? They might have carried you to serve God with them, one where or other; their poverty did not hinder that.

That's true, madam, says the maid, but they could not agree about it.

Niece. So, in short, the poor girl was left, between them, without any government or instruction; I suppose that must be the case: a sad example of a family where the husband goes one way and the wife another.

Aunt. Ay, so it was: however, she answered upon the whole, that she was very willing to go to the meeting, since her mistress desired it.

Niece. That was to say, she was perfectly indifferent in the matter, and it would have been the same thing to her, if her mistress had been a church woman, or a Roman catholic, or a Jew, or anything or nothing.

Aunt. But her mistress did not take it so; but seemed satisfied, that she agreed to go to the meeting, and so took her into the house.

Niece. And pray, madam, what came of it? how did she prove?

Aunt. Why just as a poor uneducated ignorant creature would prove. She went with them to the meeting, but pretended to the servants she did not like it, and she had rather go to church. So her mistress taking an opportunity of talking with her again one day, told her what she had heard in the house of her, and asked her if she had said that she did not like going to the meetings, but had rather go to church; and she said that indeed she did say so, but she meant nothing of harm.

Well, says her mistress, I never desire to offer violence to any servant's conscience; if you had rather go to church, you shall go to church, though you know what you said to me, when I hired you, that you were very willing to go to the meeting.

That was very true, she said, and she had not said otherwise now; but she said only, that she had rather go to church: however, if she pleased, she would stay at home.

No, no, says the mistress, I'll have no staying at home, I will have all my servants go to the public worship of God somewhere; staying at home may be as much mis-spending the Sabbath-day as going abroad for pleasure: therefore go to church, Betty, says her mistress, by all means; I am not so much against going to church, as to think that they do not serve and worship God there; by all means, if you do not care to go to the meeting, go to church: 'tis certainly your duty to go somewhere, and mine to oblige you to it.

Niece. That was spoken like a woman of very good principles.

Aunt. She is a very good sort of a person, I assure you, and generally governs herself upon good principles, principles of justice and of charity, which is a great part of religion.

Niece. Well, pray what followed?

Aunt. Why she went to church, as she said; but in a little while her mistress began to suspect her; and once or twice she betrayed herself, and discovered among the servants that she had been rambling about, but had not been at church at all. Upon this suspicion her mistress told her one day very calmly, that she had some reason to suspect that her saying she had rather go to church than to the meeting, was not a sincere dislike of one, or approving of one more than of the other, but really a project of her own to have the liberty of spending the Sabbath-day nowhere, that is to say, in running about, as she had been suffered to do when she was at home with her father and mother.

She replied, with some confidence, that indeed it was not so; and began to be more positive about her having been at church than her mistress desired she should be, because she knew she told her what was false. However, she run on, told her mistress a lie or two, which she knew to be so, and insisted that she desired to go to church because she liked to serve God in that way better than the other: so her mistress let it pass for that time, and she went to church as usual, that is to say, went where she pleased, for some time.

At last she was trapped accidentally, and could not get off any manner of way; for going rambling for her pleasure with some of the neighbouring servants, men and maids together, (for by this time she had got a gang like herself,) and going to cross the road about a mile from the town, a young citizen, that was spending the Sabbath-day on horseback, as

she was spending it on foot, I mean in pleasure, coming just up at that minute, his horse started at something, I know not at what, and giving a spring forward, run against the poor wench, beat her down, and threw him off a little further, and hurt him too, very much.

Niece. And what became of the poor girl?

Aunt. Why, she was more frighted than anything else; but she had a kick or bruise by the horse on her knee, or the horse trod on her knee, she could not tell which; but by that means she was lamed, and could not get home till about eight o'clock at night, when her mistress, coming to the knowledge of it, sent the coach for her, and brought her home.

Niece. Then there was a full discovery, indeed.

Aunt. Ay, so there was; for the neighbours' servants, that were with her, owned where they had been, and with whom, and told honestly that they had been at a cake-house to be merry.

Niece. It was no crime, perhaps, in the families where they lived.

Aunt. No, none at all; or at least no notice was taken of it, especially since they were only with neighbours, and, as they called it, were in no bad company.

Niece. But what did she do with her maid?

Aunt. Why her maid was the same; she was sorry for a while, and pretended she would never go abroad for pleasure again on a Sabbath-day: but that held but a little while, she was the same again a little while after: so her mistress resolved to part with her, for she two or three times enticed the other servants to go abroad with her, and still, when they had been missed, the answer was, they went to church with Betty; and then if Betty was asked, she would lie very readily too, and say yes. At last this came out too, and Betty was called to an ac-

count for it, and when she could deny it no longer, then she would own it, but promised to alter it, and do so no more. At length her mistress, who was in a little strait still, and loath to put any force upon the wench about going to the meeting, told her she could not bear these things, and gave her warning.

Niece. It was time to part with her, when she found she spoiled the rest of the servants.

Aunt. Well; but the wench, very loath to leave a good place, came to her mistress, and begged her to let her stay, and she would go to the meeting, and then she should be sure she did not ramble any more on the Sabbath-day.

Niece. So that 'twas plain she would serve God any way for a good place; and that was what I said of her as soon as I heard her first answer.

Aunt. But her mistress acted upon another principle still, and she refused her; No, says she, Betty, you declared in the house that you used to go to church, that you did not like the meetings, and that you had rather go to church; now I will not have anybody forced from going to church to please me; if you had been one that was bred to go to the meeting, I had been better pleased, because I have been so brought up myself; but if you choose to go to church, because you like to serve God after that manner, better than in the way I go, God forbid I should put any force upon you: I doubt not but you may serve and worship God very acceptably either way; but if you go to the meeting, which you do not like, 'tis only to keep your place, which you do like; 'tis plain to me you will worship God nowhere, for you cannot be said to worship God in a way you do not like.

Niece. She was too nice, I think, and talked to an ignorant wretch in language that she did not

understand; she might e'en ha' let her gone anywhere, for 'twas plain she would serve God nowhere.

Aunt. Well, she acted on her own principles, however.

Niece. But what did she do with the maid, then?

Aunt. Why she made her a new proposal: Look ye, Betty, says her mistress, if you will go to church honestly, and satisfy me that you do so, and that you do not, under a pretence of going to church, go abroad and spend your time idly, I shall be easy; for this was all the reason why at first I asked you where you went, and told you I expected you should go with me; not that I am against anybody's going to church, but because I desired they should serve God, and not ramble abroad. Betty promised heartily: Ay, but, says her mistress, how shall I be satisfied of the performance? Betty stood hard to have her word to be taken for it; but that would not do, because she had broke her promise before, and had told some lies too about the other servants going to church with her, as above. Well, Betty, says her mistress, I'll put you in a way to satisfy me effectually: you know the clerk of the parish lives just by, and in your way to the church; his wife is a very sober, good woman, and I know never fails of going to church, if she be well; now if you will go every Sunday with her, I'll answer for it that if you are not there she will be true to me, and so kind to you as to tell me of it, and this shall satisfy me.

Niece. If the clerk's wife was so faithful to be trusted, it was right; but that was a doubtful thing, for she would be loath, I reckon, to ruin the poor wench for failing now and then.

Aunt. Well, the short of the story was this:

Betty was Betty still; an ill habit and want of principle led her away; she seldom came to church, and the clerk's wife would lie for her; and so at last her mistress turned her away. And thus I think all servants, men and maids, should be served, would the masters and mistresses do their duty; and if this was universally practised, servants would serve God, and their mistresses too, better than they do.

Niece. They would so indeed, and for want of it, they serve neither God nor their mistresses. 'Tis a want of a religious regard to the well-ordering of servants that makes them as they are.

Aunt. Well, but I have another story to tell you, of the same gentlewoman; for after this she took a servant that she thought must necessarily be religious; for she was bred to the meetings from her infancy; but it seems she was not of the same sort as her mistress; but she told her where she used to go, and capitulated for liberty to go to the same meeting still. This her mistress readily consented to, not doubting but that one that was under such obligations, would certainly be careful to do her duty; and when she mentioned to the maid that she was very ready to yield to her going where she said she went, that she only desired to be satisfied that her servants did really go where they said they went, the maid seemed a little surprised that she should be thought capable of so wicked a thing as that, and so stopped her mistress's mouth with her character.

Niece. Well, madam, then I hope she had one to her mind.

Aunt. At the same time her husband had a manservant, who was a very religious, devout fellow, and he was a churchman. He truly conditioned, that he would be at liberty to go to church, which upon

their being satisfied that he was really a well-meaning, sober, and serious fellow, they easily consented to.

Niece. I thought you said they insisted on their servants going to worship God where they did.

Aunt. I told you they desired it, but that it was chiefly that they might be sure to have orderly servants, and that they did observe the Lord's-day, and worshipped God in some place or other, not misspending the Sabbath; otherwise they were persons of a large charity, and of a true Christian temper to those from whom they differed.

Niece. Well, but to return to their servants, how did they prove?

Aunt. Only the worst that ever were heard of.

Niece. What! both of them?

Aunt. Ay, ay, both of them. The wench was saucy, rigid, censorious; took upon her to find fault that her master and mistress, who were cheerful and good-tempered people, were not serious enough; she would not come into their family worship, because she said, 'tis sorrily performed, and she did not like it; when her mistress entertained any friends, she did not like it, 'twas wicked, and it was loose and extravagant, and had too much luxury in it, and the like.

Niece. She should have been mistress, and not maid.

Aunt. Her mistress told her so indeed, one day, when overhearing some of her talk by accident, she called her to her, and speaking something angrily to her, Jane, says she, answer me one question: what did I hire you for? Jane was a little surprised at first, not understanding the question, and said nothing, till her mistress repeated the question by way of explanation thus, Jane, pray did I hire you to do my work and to be my servant?

Yes, madam, says Jane.

Well then, says her mistress, pray do your business, and behave like a servant, as becomes you, or remove, and provide yourself; and when I want a schoolmistress to teach me how to behave in my family, I'll send for you.

Niece. That was right; that was acting like a mistress; pray what said Jane to it?

Aunt. She was confounded, and struck dumb at first, but her mistress explained it to her afterwards.

Niece. But pray what was she for a servant?

Aunt. O! a most extraordinary accomplished slattern, and a surly, heavy, unmannerly creature, that looked always as if she thought herself fitter to be mistress, than her that was so; did everything with reluctance, awkward and disrespectful, and yet wilful, and above being taught, dull to the last degree, but scorned reproof.

Niece. Certainly she had more of the pretence to religion than of the reality; for Christianity teaches us to fill up every relative duty with equal exactness and with a suitable diligence and application.

Aunt. Why, to bring my story to a point, she had the outside of religion only; whether she took it up with a design to deceive, or whether she deceived herself, and fell from what she at first professed, I know not; but she fell quite off from religion itself at last; and adding to that some follies, which I choose to say nothing of, my good neighbour turned her off, and got rid of her.

Niece. There she was cheated in her own way.

Aunt. She was so, and I told her of it; but she answered me with a saying which I have often made use of before, and that with relation to myself; I am never, said she, in so much danger to be cheated, as when people pretend to be religious; for then I think they dare not do such things as I am afraid of.

(*Here the second sister came into the room, and finding what discourse they were engaged in, after her respects paid to her aunt, and to her sister, she desired they would go on with their discourse, for that she knew the subject, and it was what she came on purpose to have a share in.*)

Aunt. I was telling your sister how a lady of my acquaintance was cheated with two religious servants.

Sec. Niece. I heard the last part; and she was a nice one indeed.

Aunt. O! I have not told you half of her behaviour ——

Sec. Niece. Well, but madam, how did it fare with the man-servant; how did he behave?

Aunt. Why every jot as ill another way: when he should be at hand to be called, and when his master wanted him on any occasion, he was gone to church to prayers; and when prayers were done, he would often fall in as he came home, at a certain alehouse that unhappily stood in the way home, and I think, once or twice came home drunk.

Sec. Niece. Fine things indeed for a conscientious wretch! these were religious servants it seems.

Aunt. Hold, niece! religion, no, nor any profession or opinion in religion is not altered one way or other, by the mistakes and miscarriages of those that make a profession of it. The eleven blessed apostles were not at all the worse, or is the memory of them to be the less reverenced, for the twelfth being a devil; nor must we expect that all our servants shall be saints, when they are what we call religious; all people have failings, religion does not always change natural tempers.

Sec. Niece. But we should expect they should be Christians and servants too. Religion never takes away good manners, or privileges servants from ob-

serving the due space which nature has put between the person to be served, and the person serving.

Fir. Niece. The great thing I insist upon taking religious servants for, is, that they may be examples in a family, of sobriety, quiet submission, diligence and seriousness, to their fellow-servants; that they be encouragers, not hinderers of God's worship in the house; that the whole family may cheerfully unite in serving God, and in all religious rules and orders; that if an ignorant and untaught creature is taken into the house, they may be instructed and led by the hand into the proper duties of a Christian; that all the house may be a class of Christians, doing their duty in their respective places, both from a principle of justice and of charity.

Aunt. But 'tis very rare, niece, to find what you speak of.

Fir. Niece. It is so, madam: but then, since it is not probable we should always find such, all that I insist on in the mean time is, that we should take care, as near as possible, to take those that are well inclined, and well educated: not enemies to all religion, not such as make a mock of worshipping their Maker, or observing his rules; such I would not entertain at all, on any account whatsoever; they would be a continual offence in a sober family.

Sec. Niece. But there are some that may be in the middle way, no enemies to religion, not mockers at all sober things, and yet not much stored with serious thoughts, not void of principle, nor void of modesty.

Aunt. Why, it is true, there are some such, and I know not what to say to such; I would rather have them than the other.

Fir. Niece. I like those but a little better, I would have neither of them if I could help it.

Aunt. It is true that they always discover a

coldness and backwardness to every good thing, and secretly despise the most serious things as well as the other: but good manners restrains them a little from insulting the family. I do not like such, I confess.

Sec. Niece. But they may be better borne with, madam, than the first sort.

Aunt. Well, but your sister here is so far from approving that sort, that even if they were seriously religious, she would not entertain them, if they were of a different opinion; she is of the same notion with my cook-maid, that I told you the story of, that all differing opinions in religion, will, in such creatures as these, despise and contemn those that differ from them, and either hate or make a jest of one another.

Sec. Niece. My sister, it may be, is grown rigid that way, from the disaster of the family with respect to her husband and herself; but in carrying it so far, then, she will make it almost impossible to have any servants at all, but such as we bring up ourselves.

Fir. Niece. It is no matter for that; I am positive in it, with respect to a family's peace, and the harmony of religious worship in any family, it is all destroyed and lost by these little difficulties: as long as there are servants to be had, and I could pay wages, I would change five hundred servants, till I found one to my purpose; nor should any fitness for my business, or any goodness of humour in a servant, prevail with me to keep her, if she wanted the main article of religion, and the same opinion of religion too with my own.

Aunt. I am afraid, child, you would change five hundred indeed then, before you would be fitted.

Fir. Niece. Why, madam, I hope I am not of

such strange principles and opinions, that nobody can be found of those opinions but me.

Aunt. No, my dear; but servants have rarely any notions of those things, or enter far into them.

Fir. Niece. Well, madam, I would venture it, for I would no more entertain those who differed from my opinion in religion, than I would entertain those that had none at all; for the difference in opinion in servants, has more mischiefs in it sometimes, than the other.

Aunt. I grant it would be very well to have servants of the same opinion in religion with ourselves, but it cannot be always so; the first and main point that I have made my rule, has been, to have servants that are religiously inclined in general, and that are willing to be instructed; these, having a modest sober behaviour in the main, are more easily brought to comply with religious things in the family, whether they are the same way that they were first inclined to, or not; such as these are often brought, by good examples in the house, to be of the same opinion with ourselves.

Sec. Niece. Such are, indeed, a great tie upon masters and mistresses of families to take care that we recommend the profession we make of religion by a good example; for servants are not likely to turn to our opinion, or embrace with us the part which we take in religion, when they see us not practising the things we pretend to teach, and not winning them to our opinion by a conversation becoming religion.

Aunt. It is very true, niece, and would masters and mistresses keep upon their minds a sense of what influence their conduct may have upon their servants; how they may be the means of bringing them to a serious embracing of religion, or to a greater levity and indifference, than it may be they

had before, as they see a good or ill example in those they serve, we should have much better masters and mistresses than we have, and more religious servants too.

Fir. Niece. That's very true, and it were to be wished it were well observed. But since it is not always so, I cannot reconcile it to common reasoning, that we should take servants of any principles or opinion of religion, but such as we profess ourselves.

Aunt. If it can be avoided.

Fir. Niece. Certainly, it may be avoided if we will.

Sec. Niece. You would except such as, being ignorant and untaught, profess themselves willing to come into religious families that they may be guided into good things by teaching and example.

Fir. Niece. Yes, I do except such; for such are to be moulded this way or that, as Providence casts them into religious or irreligious families.

Aunt. We agree in that part exactly; and indeed, were I to choose, I would rather take a servant who, being ignorant in religious matters, was yet sober, and willing to be instructed: I say, much rather than take one fixed in his or her religious opinion, and that opinion differing from my own.

Fir. Niece. Indeed, madam, I am positive in that point; I cannot go from it; I would not take one that differed from me in opinion in religion by any means; no, upon no account at all; it is attended with nothing but confusion in the family: I would almost as soon take a loose profane wench, that owned no religion at all: I have seen so much of it, and found such inconveniences in having religious quarrels and differences in the family by it, that I think 'tis unsufferable: I told you the story of our poor negro, that would turn Christian: we had one

servant a papist, and he would have the boy a Roman catholic; another would have him be a Church of England protestant; and another would have had him been a presbyterian: 'twas a reproach even to the name of Christian, to hear how one told him he would be damned if he was this; another told him he would be damned if he was that; and the other told him he would be damned if he was either of them, and so of the rest; so that the poor boy was almost distracted among them, as I told you at large before.

Aunt. Without entering into examples, I grant 'tis very pernicious, and a great obstruction to family religion, and that many ways.

Sec. Niece. Were there a spirit of peace and charity always to be found, where there was an outward appearance of religion, it would be quite otherwise; but that is not our case in this age. You see, madam, what was the case in your neighbour's family, where the religious servants, I mean appearingly religious, were the worst servants, and the worst Christians, they could have met with.

Aunt. I did not bring those examples to lessen the value of good, serious, religious servants; but to hint to you the danger there is (among those that call themselves such) to find hypocrites, and also to note, that religion does not always make a good servant.

Sec. Niece. It ought to do so, and would do so, if the rules of Christianity were faithfully observed.

Aunt. But it is not always so, and therefore, as I say, I would not take a servant that was not religious, or religiously inclined; so I do not say, that I would not for the sake of their being serious and religiously inclined, take a bad servant; for religion does not always qualify a servant.

Sec. Niece. No, madam, religion does not make

them good-humoured, cleanly, active, diligent and mannerly, and the like; it will make them faithful and honest, that is inseparable, but there is many a good Christian that makes a bad servant.

Aunt. But I know some of them expect we should bear with all the rest, for what they call religious.

Fir. Niece. And perhaps are not so at bottom neither.

Aunt. Nay, that sort of them are generally otherwise, and put on an appearance of religion only to disguise themselves the more dexterously, and these are the religious servants that I am aptest to be deceived by; but there are some of the other too.

Sec. Niece. 'Tis one of the worst parts of a hypocrite, I think, when they study to cover a vicious life with the mask of religion.

Aunt. But I think too, that it is soonest discovered.

Sec. Niece. It may indeed be sooner discovered than other disguises, because the levity is apt to break out at proper intervals, in spite of the utmost caution: but the mischief is often done first, when the discovery is too late to prevent it; and therefore, upon the whole, there is a great risk in taking servants, that we are not very well assured of, one way or other.

Fir. Niece. But I hope you do not argue for being indifferent in the case.

Sec. Niece. No, no, very far from it; but I own, 'tis a critical case.

Fir. Niece. Let it be as critical as it will, 'tis absolutely necessary to be taken care of, if we will have religious servants. 'Tis a sad thing to have the master and mistress praying in one part of the house, and the men and maids swearing or railing, or laughing or jeering, in another part of it. Next

to having the master and mistress religious, it is essential to a religious family, to have the servants religious too.

Sec. Niece. If it be possible to find such.

Fir. Niece. They must be found religious, or be made so.

Sec. Niece. 'Tis but coarse work to new-mould a servant: as you find them, you have them, generally. Most of the servants of this age are uncapable enough to be meddled with. I mean as to instruction.

Aunt. I cannot say so: I am thankful that I can say that I have had a loose, wicked, irreligious servant or two, who, by taking some pains with them, have been brought to be very serious and very religious.

Sec. Niece. Then they have thanked God for your bettering them by your instruction.

Aunt. So they have, I assure you, niece.

Fir. Niece. But they were originally of a docible, tractable temper, then, which is very rare among servants. But, madam, allow you could take that task upon you, and your application had success, you would not expect that every mistress like you, should set up for an instructor of their servants.

Aunt. No, no; but it is not so hopeless a thing, however, as you may imagine: for if a girl has any modesty, she cannot but listen a little to the instruction of those that wish her so well, and that have so little obligation upon them to do it.

Fir. Niece. Why, madam, an untaught wench, that is modest and willing to be instructed, I take, as I said before, to be among the number that are fit to be taken: the very example of a religious family will make her religious also.

Aunt. My dear, you touch us all there, and that

upon a nice point too; it must be confessed that it is because there are so few religious families, that there are so few religious servants.

Fir. Niece. That is true, madam; but on the other hand, loose, profane, irreligious servants, are a great hinderance to the setting up religious families. Those I am utterly against.

Aunt. And that is the reason, child, that I say they should not be taken into our families.

Fir. Niece. And should be turned out again as soon as discovered, and that without any certificate given them of their good behaviour, or without giving them what we call a good character.

Aunt. We cannot deny them a certificate, child, when they have not wronged or robbed us, the law requires that of us.

Fir. Niece. But then, madam, the certificate should mention that I dismiss such a man, or such a maid, for being a profane, irreligious person, or for breaking the Sabbath-day, or for not going to church, when ordered to go there, or for going abroad to be merry, when they should have been at church, and such like, as the case may happen to be.

Aunt. I own there is a great deal of reason to do so; but we are apt to think it hard to do so, and that it is taking a poor servant's livelihood from them.

Fir. Niece. But we should consider too, how much harder it is to push a profligate wretch into a sober family, under the recommendation of a false character. We cannot say we do justice to our neighbour, or to do as we would be done by: for still I go back to what we both said before, that irreligious servants are a great hinderance to masters and mistresses in setting up religious rules and exercises in their families.

Aunt. Ay, and a great discouragement in carrying them on, when they are set up; and for both those reasons, I would advise all my friends to take no servants that had not some sense of religion upon them.

Sec. Niece. I join heartily with my sister in her opinion, if such servants can be had; but what then must be done when we get irreligious and profane creatures into our houses and cannot help it; or find them so, when we expected the contrary?

Aunt. No! my dear! the case is plain; we must not let servants laugh us out of our religion: we must go on in the way of our duty, and set up the worship of God in the house; and as often as we find the servants flout at it, or contemn it, return the contempt upon themselves, and turn them out, but go on to perform the duty: turn them all away that pretend to behave irreverently, or pretend to mock or scoff at it; I say, turn them all away, and let it be the standing known rule in the family, that all the servants that come may hear of it as soon as they converse in the house; then they will know what they have to trust to, and will behave accordingly. 'Tis omitting our duty in our families, not our performing it, that makes servants mock. When they see us religious to-day, and wicked to-morrow, they may well scoff; but where serious religion is steadily maintained in a family, it commands that awe and reverence of servants, that they grow religious of course. Thus one good family breeds good servants for another, and the good examples of a sober family, make the servants all sober.

Sec. Niece. I acknowledge all that: but I have not practised that part indeed, of turning them away for their irreligious profane carriage when

discovered. I have endeavoured to get religious servants; but when I have found them otherwise, I have not turned them off, which indeed I should have done.

Aunt. So far you are wrong, my dear; for why not put away a coachman or chambermaid as well for being wicked as idle, for being an offender against Heaven, as well as for being an offender against ourselves? I think the reasoning is every way as good.

Sec. Niece. It may hold in many cases.

Aunt. Indeed, niece, I think it will hold in all cases; and I can give you some instances, where servants knowing it before, have behaved much the better on that account: but 'tis late now, we will talk of that part another time.

The end of the second dialogue.

DIALOGUE III.

A FEW days after this lady and her two nieces had discoursed this point about servants, the aunt and both her nieces, that is to say, the eldest of the sisters and the widow, had another dialogue upon the subject of giving a character to servants, and the justice that was to be done in it on one side and on the other, on the following occasion.

The eldest sister had taken a very scoundrel idle jade of a servant, and that too after having received a very good character of her from a gentlewoman with whom she had lived before; and she complained heavily of the injustice of it, and that she had been abused by the said gentlewoman, and was telling

her tale to her aunt, which introduced the following dialogue.

Aunt. I find, child, you lay all the fault of your being disappointed upon the wench's former mistress; you don't seem to say the maid herself has deceived you.

Fir. Niece. Indeed, madam, I am deceived both ways; but I blame the maid's former mistress most.

Aunt. Why so? Did not the maid pretend to be otherwise than you find her?

Fir. Niece. Yes, madam, that is true; but I did not expect so much from a maid, when she came to be hired; I did not expect she would tell her own faults.

Aunt. Well, but on the other hand, you did not expect she should tell you she was able to do what she did not understand, or should undertake what she was no ways qualified to perform.

Fir. Niece. No, that's true, madam: but she was willing to get into a good place.

Aunt. And to do it, she must be allowed to introduce herself by a parcel of lies and shams, and pretend to be what she has no pretence to; I think that as bad as any of the rest.

Sec. Niece. I join with my aunt in that part. I think the law should have provided some punishment for servants that give themselves characters they do not deserve, as well as for other pieces of dishonesty; for, in short, it is a downright fraud, a cheat, and a piece of dishonesty intolerable. For example, a cook comes and hires herself to me, to serve as such; and when she has undertaken the business, it appears she understands nothing of cookery, and has never been anything but a middle maid, to wash and scrub the rooms, and the like: or a chambermaid offers herself, and tells me she

knows how to make mantuas, cut hair, clear-starch, and the like; and when it comes to the trial, acknowledges she does not understand any of them, or only this, and not that, as it happens. Why should not this maid be punished, as well as she that, pretending to be honest, proves a thief?

Aunt. No, child; she does deserve to be ill used: but the case differs as to a thief; for she is punishe not for pretending honesty, and deceiving me in th character, but for her actual theft and robbing me of my goods.

Sec. Niece. Well, madam, then the punishment should differ too. I do not say she should be hanged, but I think she should be punished, however, some way or other.

Fir. Niece. We have ways to punish such a servant, and all servants too, if all mistresses would be just to themselves, and to one another. We might make up the deficiency of the law in that case to ourselves very easily, and the want of doing ourselves justice is the thing I complain of.

Aunt. How would you make it up?

Fir. Niece. Why, madam, whenever any such servant came to me, I would be sure to turn her away again, with all the resentment that her behaviour required; and when she sent any future mistress to me for a character, I would do her justice.

Sec. Niece. You should say, sister, that you would do the gentlewoman justice, who came to inquire of you about her.

Aunt. Why truly, you put it right there, niece.

Sec. Niece. Indeed, madam, that is the foundation of all the grievances we are under about servants, that we make no conscience of doing one another justice, when we make inquiries after the character of another's servant.

Fir. Niece. Why we are loath to hinder poor servants; for to take away their characters, is to take away their bread.

Sec. Niece. We may say the same of a thief or a housebreaker, when we find them in our houses or gardens, and take them even in the very fact: we are loath to ruin them for it; that it was necessity forced them to do what they did; and if we have them committed, they will be hanged or transported: nay, the argument is stronger, because the injury done may have been trifling, and the punishment there is loss of life, which we may be loath to be concerned in.

Fir. Niece. You carry the case a great deal too high, sister; I cannot think they are alike.

Sec. Niece. Truly, sister, I think 'tis much the same; but of the two, I take, here is the greater obligation.

Aunt. I believe I take your notion right, niece; the obligation is this: if I take the thief, and give him up to the law, he is undone, and his life must pay for it; and 'tis a sad thing for me to let a poor fellow be put to death, or transported, for robbing me of a trifle. But, on the other hand, I am to consider, (1.) I am obliged by the law to do it; that it is not I that put him to death, but the laws of his country, and his own crime is the cause of it; and I am an offender against that very law, and in some sense, a confederate with him, at least an encourager of him in his crime, if I omit it: but which is more than that, (2.) By my perhaps unseasonable, and indeed unjust compassion, I become accessary to all the robberies he shall be guilty of after it; because if I had done as the law directed me, I had put him out of a condition to rob or injure any other person.

Sec. Niece. You have fully explained my mean-

ing, madam, and I take the case to be the same; I by no means do as I ought, or as the law directs, if when my neighbour taking a servant after me, and coming to me for a character of her, I decline speaking the truth of her, ay, and the whole truth too.

Fir. Niece. Then no servant would get a place, as servants are now.

Aunt. Then, niece, they would be more humble, and careful how they behave.

Fir. Niece. It is a nice case, and we ought to take a great care then, that we do not injure them.

Sec. Niece. That's true; we ought to do them no wrong; but we do the person that is to take them an irreparable wrong, if we recommend an ill servant to them.

Aunt. Nay, we break another law, that you have not thought of yet; for we do not do in it as we would be done by, which is the great Christian rule.

Sec. Niece. Not only so, madam, but we do as we would not be done by: for would any of us, if we go to inquire of a servant, be told she was honest, when she was a thief? That she was neat, when she was nasty; tight, when she was a slattern; diligent, when she was idle; quiet, when she was saucy; and modest, when she was, it may be, a bold hussy? and the like.

Aunt. I observe, indeed, there is a general backwardness in people whenever we go to inquire about a servant. A mistress cannot be said to recommend earnestly, because it is to be granted that she parted with the servant for something or other. But she is therefore, on the other hand, shy and backward, and will say nothing, or but little, of the real character of the servant, because, forsooth, she would not hinder her a place; and indeed I

would be very loath myself to ruin a poor girl, because I did not like her; but I do think, as you say, niece, we mistresses are too backward to be free with one another in such cases.

Sec. Niece. It would not only answer the end, madam, as to the law part; but it would bring servants back to be servants again, as they used to be, and as they ought to be; for really they can hardly be called servants now.

Fir. Niece. I wish it was with us, in case of our maids, as it is with the gentlemen in the case of their men-servants, viz., that we should be obliged to give certificates to our maids when they went away.

Sec. Niece. Why even then the case would be the same; for if the form of the certificate was not settled too by the act of parliament, we should sign anything they desired us.

Fir. Niece. Nay, sister, that would be our faults.

Aunt. Why so it is our faults now, child, if we give them wrong characters.

Fir. Niece. I do not say we should give wrong characters; but I should be loath to say the utmost of a poor servant, and so prejudice everybody against her: perhaps what she did amiss with me, she might mend with another, and perhaps what might not please me, another might bear with.

Sec. Niece. I will put an end to all that immediately, sister: I do not mean that I should enter into a long accusation of a servant, and give the history of her life, or that I would blast her for trifles, or give her an ill name for not suiting exactly to my temper: but I speak in capital, essential articles, such as denominate a wench a good or bad servant; and I'll tell you a case, when I went to a lady my-

self to inquire about a chambermaid who had been sent to me by another person.

Aunt. But what was the person that sent or recommended her? did she know her?

Sec. Niece. She was an honest, well-meaning, poor woman, that used to help me to maids when I wanted.

Aunt. But then, I suppose, did not know much of her own knowledge.

Sec. Niece. No, madam, but the maid gave me an account where she had lived last, and I went to the lady, and told her I came to inquire of such a maid-servant, who, as she had said, had lived with her. Yes, she told me, she had lived with her.

Pray how long did she live with you, madam? said I.

Pray, madam, how long does she say she lived with me? says she.

Almost a year, madam, says I; I think it wanted but a month, or thereabouts: at which she made a kind of a hum, and said nothing for awhile.

Now I did not like the way of answering my question with a question; for I thought she might have told me positively how long the maid had lived with her, and left me to judge whether she had spoken truth; whereas by returning the question upon me, she kept it in her own breast to accuse or excuse her: so I turned it short upon her; I hope, madam, says I, you will be so plain with me as to let me know whether she says true or not.

Yes, yes, madam, says she.

This surprised me again; for this had a double meaning, as plain as could be, and it was impossible to know whether she meant, yes, that it was as the maid had said, or, yes, that she would let me know whether the maid had said true or not. So I stopped awhile, to give her time to go on, and ex-

plain herself; but finding she did not, I repeated my question: Pray, madam, says I, be pleased to let me know exactly how long she lived with you.

Why, madam, says she, not quite a year: the maid says true in that.

I was far from being satisfied with that kind of answer; the manner of drawing out her words showing me plainly that the wench had lied. However, lest I should quarrel with her too soon, and so have no more out of her, I dropped it, and asked her some other questions.

Pray, madam, says I, is she a good workwoman?

Yes, yes, says she, she does her work well enough.

This was all equivocation again. Anybody would have understood by my question, that I inquired if she was good at her needle; but she would not take it as I meant it, and put it off with an answer that might be true, if the wench knew how to make a bed, or sweep a room; so I explained myself, and said, Madam, by a good workwoman I mean at her needle, I hope you understand me.

Truly, madam, says she, I think she is well enough; I never put her to much of that kind, having other hands in the house.

Well, there she came better off with me a little than before, but still all this gave me no character of the maid; so I went on.

Pray, madam, says I, what do you say to her honesty? she is honest, I hope.

I have no reason to tax her honesty, says she; she never wronged me of anything, that I know of: I charge her with nothing.

Even this was but a very indifferent way of vouching for a girl's honesty, and if she was really honest, she was not just to her.

Well, madam, says I, may I ask you what was the occasion of your parting with her?

O, madam, says she, we parted indeed; she and I could not agree: I am passionate, and pretty troublesome, and my maid and I could not hit it; but she may do very well with another. Perhaps other mistresses may not be so troublesome and difficult as I am; she may do very well; I assure you she knows how to please anybody but me; she told me so herself.

I was, indeed, provoked now, and answered, Madam, you are pleased to give yourself some hard words; but I beg you will allow me to say, I did not come for a character of the maid's mistress, but a character of the maid; and, I doubt, by your discourse, you are willing to recommend your maid's character at the expense of your own.

She only smiled at me when I said thus, and said again she was very difficult and ill to please; but Betty might do very well with another.

I pressed her again to let me know what she parted with her maid for; but still she shuffled me off, and gave me the cunningest evasive answers. Betty herself could not have put me off with half the dexterity as her mistress did; so I made my honours as if I was going away.

Madam, says I, you are exceeding tender of your maid; but I cannot say you are equally just to a stranger, that you see resolved to depend upon your word for the character of a servant. However, I shall take it the way I hope you intend it, namely, that though it may be for the girl's advantage not to have the particulars of her behaviour told, yet you would have me understand by it that her conduct will not bear a character, and that you would not have me venture upon her; and I shall take your advice.

At this she seemed concerned, as if she had expected that her awkward way of talking of the wench had satisfied me, and that I did not understand her; and as I offered to go, Pray, madam, says she, don't say so; Betty may make you a very good servant; I am sorry you should take me so: the maid may do well in another place, though she might not suit me.

As I was talking, I observed that in the drawing-room to the room we sat in, there sat a gentleman reading in a great book, and every now and then he looked off his book, when his wife (for it was her husband) spoke, as if he was surprised at what she said; and as the folding-doors stood wide open, so that the rooms were, as it were, let both into one, he heard all we said, and I perceived that, as he looked off his book when his wife spoke, so he almost laughed outright when I spoke.

At last, as if he was not able to hold any longer, he clapped up the book pretty hard, and threw it by, and came forward into the room we were in, and making me a very low bow as he passed, he offered to go out; when his lady stepped up to him, and said something softly, which he answered softly, and with abundance of good humour in his face, said to his wife, My dear, I will not interrupt you; upon which I offered to go away. By no means, madam, said he, my business is of no moment. So taking hold of his wife's hand, he as it were turned her towards me, and at going away, My dear, says he, don't hold the lady in suspense about your maid, for I hear that is the business: let her have a true character of her; you would be glad to be dealt plainly with yourself. His wife smiled, but said nothing at first, but presently turned to him, and all in a pleasant good humour she gave him a little tap on the arm with her hand: Do you give a cha-

racter of her, if you think I ha'n't done it well. Must I? says he: Why then, madam, says he to me, with my wife's leave, she is a damned jade, a horrid scold, a liar; and though she has, I believe, stolen nothing from us, was a thief in the place she came last from, which we heard of since, and for that very thing my wife turned her away.

I made him a curtsy, and told him I was greatly obliged to him for so much sincerity, and found his lady had been only tender of her maid's character, but had not at all recommended her. Why, madam, says he, my wife was cheated in this wench, only by the people she lived with before, giving her ambiguous answers, and speaking as favourably as they could; and that is the ruin of us all, adds he, in taking servants.

But, sir, says I, the lady she lived with before did your lady a great deal of wrong, if she knew her to be what you say she was in her service.

I don't know, madam, how 'twas for that: I never meddle with these things, says he, but I believe my wife was not so nice in her inquiries as you are; or if she was, she was easier to be cheated in their answers; and 'tis the ladies being thus backward to give just and plain accounts to one another, that is the reason that such a wretched gang of wenches run from house to house, and get places, and behave in them as they do. Would the ladies, says he, be just to one another, speak plain and honestly, and give the creatures such characters as they deserve, they would take care to deserve better characters, and not behave so insolently, and so saucily as they do. This jade, madam, says he, that you come to inquire of, has insulted and taunted her mistress two or three times, at such a rate that I have been forced to send a footman into the room to bring her out by the head and shoulders,

for fear her mistress should be frighted; and yet she is so good to that slut, that she cannot find in her heart to speak the truth of her.

My dear, says the lady, I have not said anything but truth of her.

Well, my dear, says she again, I was not upon my oath.

Why, that is true too, child, said he, but you are upon your honour, and that is equivalent to an oath; and it would be hard to have this lady left to take such a devil into her house, merely for fear of injuring the wench; why, you would injure the family you suffer to take her, much more than the maid. Let her go seek her fortune where nobody knows her, and there she may have time to mend her manners, and come to town again.

Aunt. Why, niece, this gentleman was your instructor. I think 'tis just his language that you speak; only I think you did not talk so moderatel quite as he does.

Sec. Niece. And very good language too, madam; 'tis for want of this gentleman's rule that we have any saucy, insolent, idle servants in the world.

Fir. Niece. It would make servants more cautious of their behaviour, I confess: but then, sister, it would put it in the power of mistresses to ruin poor servants when they pleased, and even when there was no good cause; the bread of a servant would depend upon the breath of a mistress.

Sec. Niece. There is no good in this world without a mixture of evil; no convenience without its inconvenience; but the damage that way, if it should be so at any time, is infinitely less than the mischief to families which comes by the insolence and wickedness of servants.

Aunt. Nay, by the universal degeneracy of ser-

vants, you might have said; for even those we call good servants, at this time, are quite different things from what they were in former times, ay, ever since I can remember.

Sec. Niece. Well, madam, but I could propose a remedy even against that part, which my sister objects against, of doing servants wrong; for I do not deny that some mistresses may injure their servants, and there ought to be no wrong on either hand.

Fir. Niece. I have known a mistress refuse to give a poor servant a character, only because she was unwilling to part with her, and yet at the same time use her ill too.

Sec. Niece. Such things may happen, I do not deny that.

Fir. Niece. I have also known a mistress injure a servant by her partiality in favour of other servants, and give a maid an ill character when she has not deserved it, by the mere reproaches raised on her by others.

Sec. Niece. It is not possible to reckon up all the cases in which a mistress may injure a servant: 'tis true, and there can no rule be set so exact, as that nobody shall be oppressed: but I have two things to say:—

1. All the injustice that can be supposed to happen that way, is not equal to that which mistresses and families now suffer from the insolence and baseness of servants; and therefore the remedy is to be embraced, and the lesser evil chosen.
2. There may be methods directed by the law, that in such cases, where mistresses have nothing capital to charge upon a servant, they shall be obliged to give them certificates of their behaviour.

Aunt. I have often thought of that; but unless the form of that certificate be settled and adjusted by that very act of parliament, the mistresses will just write what they please, and when they are prejudiced against a servant, will say nothing in their certificates that shall do them any service, or recommend them at all to any one else.

Sec. Niece. Those must be very malicious people that will go that length with a servant.

Fir. Niece. But such people there are, and such perhaps always will be.

Sec. Niece. Well, there may be a remedy for that too, for there may be two or three several forms of certificates directed by the law; one volunteer, and full to all the behaviour of a servant, and the other to her honesty and sobriety only.

Aunt. Why then, child, nobody would take a servant that had only your second-rate certificate; they would presently say, her mistress had given no character but what she could not help.

Sec. Niece. I rather think, madam, that all servants would content themselves with what you are pleased to call my second-rate certificate.

Aunt. Come, let us hear what kind of certificate it is, if you are lawyer enough to draw it up.

Sec. Niece. I am not lawyer enough to draw it up in form; but it should be to this purpose, madam.

THE CERTIFICATE.

I, A. B., do hereby certify that the bearer hereof, M. B., lived with me as a chambermaid one year and a quarter, ending the day of last, during which time she behaved herself honestly, modestly, and dutifully, as became a servant.

Witness my hand,
A. B.

Aunt. Why truly, niece, a servant that could not deserve so much character as that, nobody ought to take.

Sec. Niece. Well, madam, and a servant that did deserve so much character as that, no mistress ought to deny.

Fir. Niece. But suppose, sister, a mistress would maliciously deny it, as I said before.

Sec. Niece. Why then the maid should have the same remedy as she has for her wages, viz., complain to a justice of peace, that in case upon the mistress's being heard, if she could not give sufficient reasons and proof of the fact, for which she refused such a certificate, the justice should sign the certificate to the maid, intimating that, having heard all that could be alleged, he did not find there was sufficient cause for refusing it.

Aunt. Well, niece, and what was your first-rate certificate, pray, that you call this the second?

Sec. Niece. Why, madam, when a mistress may have a kindness for a servant, and is willing to give her an extraordinary recommendation, she may add that she is a very good needlewoman, or that she is a very good cook, that she was not only faithful, but diligent, and so in other cases: but, as I said, I believe any servant will be contented with the second, which is sufficient.

Fir. Niece. I agree, that the giving such certificates would put an end to all those inquiries.

Sec. Niece. Which oftentimes leave us in the dark as much as we were before they were made, nay, and sometimes more, a great deal.

Aunt. That is our fault, indeed, that we will not, with freedom and plainness, acquaint one another what we are to expect from the maids we hire; and 'tis presuming upon this charitable disposition of mistresses, that maids behave so saucily as they do

Sec. Niece. Well, if any of my maids go from me, I tell them plainly beforehand what they are to expect of me, and what kind of character I shall give them, if they send anybody to me.

Fir. Niece. And what effect has that upon them? are they the better for it?

Sec. Niece. Why I'll tell you what effect it had upon one of my maids. I had told her my mind very roundly one day, upon the occasion of something I did not like, and truly my maid turned very short upon me, and told me she was sorry she could not please me, and hoped I would provide myself then. I told her that she should not say she could not please me, but that she would not please me.

She answered very pertly that it was as I would, I might take it which way I pleased.

Very well, says I, Mary, you are very tart with me; I hope when you send your next mistress to me for a character, you will expect to hear those very words again.

Why would I be so barbarous, said she, to rip up words that passed in anger, and give them for the character of any servant?

No, Mary, says I, you should not say, will I be so barbarous; you should say, would I be so honest as to give a character of you from your own mouth: depend upon it, Mary, says I, I shall not be so unjust to any mistress, to conceal a thing of that moment from them; why it would be doing them the greatest injury in the world.

She stood still a good while, and said nothing; but as she saw me looking at her, as if I expected an answer, the girl fell a crying, run to me, and, offering to kneel to me, begged my pardon, and told me she hoped I would allow her to recall her warning, for she was resolved she would live with me till she had deserved a better character.

Aunt. Poor girl! I should have told her she might go when she would then, for she had deserved a better character just then.

Sec. Niece. I did not say so to her, but I would not let her kneel; and I told her I would not insist upon her warning, for as long as she behaved so to me, I should, I believed, never put her away.

Aunt. Well, but did she mend afterwards?

Sec. Niece. Indeed she was a very good servant before, only a little hasty and impatient of reproof, but she proved the best servant after it that anybody ever had. She is with me still.

Aunt. It is certainly so: if we give fair, bold, and just characters of them, and it once came to be the custom or general usage among mistresses, servants would quickly carry it after another manner, at least they would take care to part upon as good terms as they could with their mistresses.

Sec. Niece. Ay, and we should not cheat one another, as we do now, in giving characters to the vilest creatures that fall in our way.

THE END.

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